

Saturday Review

The older the harder



Diane Keaton looks back to the Woody Allen years and forward to harder times finding the right parts

Winter of discontent

Crisis management has become Mikhail Gorbachev's stock in trade, but can he manage to survive?

Your seat at the theatre

Times readers get discounts on top seats at West End shows

WEEKEND LIVING

Walking back to the country



Margaret Dobson's castle reflects the spirit of a series of country guides, first compiled 50 years ago, now finding a new audience

Verdi comes to dinner

Opera parties, dinner followed by mini-versions of great works, are the latest innovation in home entertainment

SPORT

Fallen idol weighs in



A preview of former champion Mike Tyson's second comeback fight in Atlantic City tonight

WEEKEND MONEY

Thanks a billion

Inheritances are likely to reach £55 billion annually by the end of the century, mainly because of the rise in property values

Teaching the teachers

Young readers give their (often surprising) views on the state of education

INDEX

Arts	21
Births, marriages, deaths	13
Business	32-36
Court & social	12
Crosswords	13-24
Leading articles	11
Letters	11-39
Obituaries	12
Schools	19
Schooling	25-31
Sport	22-23
TV & radio	24
Weather	24
Weekend Money	36-42

Britons in Kuwait told: stay in hiding

Champagne jet flies out to fetch hostages

By MICHAEL THEODOLOU IN NICOSIA AND ANDREW MCEWEN IN LONDON

A BRITISH Airways plane flew to the Middle East last night to collect hostages after the Iraqi assembly rubber-stamped President Saddam Hussein's decision to free all foreigners.

The Boeing 767, laden with food, champagne and medical supplies, was diverted to Amman after being refused entry to Baghdad by Iraqi authorities, who said their state airline would fly out the captives.

British Airways hopes to bring the first of 1,200 Britons home this afternoon, but diplomats said it could take several days for visas to be issued. The Foreign Office advised those in hiding in Kuwait to remain so.

Both sides in the Gulf confrontation continued to bolster their forces yesterday, in spite of the renewed hopes of peace engendered by the decision to release the hostages. The planned direct talks between America and Iraq also hit a snag when Washington said it would not set up a meeting between President Bush and the Iraqi foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, until a firm date was agreed for James Baker, the Secretary of State, to see President Saddam.

Richard Cheney, the American defence secretary, asked fellow Nato members to send more troops to the region. "The sooner the better", although he told a meeting of alliance defence ministers that the Iraqis could be forced out of Kuwait without them. So far, only Britain and France have sent ground troops.

Egypt announced that it was increasing its military forces in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates this month, taking the total to almost 30,000 men. President Saddam has sent a further 30,000 troops to Kuwait and Southern Iraq to reinforce the 430,000 already dug in.

As the military build-up continued apace, church leaders in Britain, including the Archbishop of Canterbury and Westminster, issued a joint statement expressing doubts about the use of force. The document said that most Christians agreed that war could not be a moral option unless all attempts at a peaceful solution were exhausted. Even then, the consequences of war should not be out of proportion to the injustice that prompted it. "We are not convinced that the first condition has been met and the fulfilment of the second poses grave difficulties," it said.

Meanwhile, inter-Arab dip-

lomacy was intensifying. One formula being floated involved an Iraqi withdrawal from all parts of Kuwait apart from the contested Rumaila oilfield. In exchange the Iraqis would be given a pledge of non-aggression by the allies and the possibility of leasing two Kuwaiti islands to give it access to the Gulf.

The idea may be raised behind the scenes at the ten-nation Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries meeting that opens in Cairo today. Iraq has said it will attend and Egypt says that any attempt to block Kuwaiti participation will fail. A European diplomat said: "If the meeting proceeds smoothly, it will indicate that the Iraqis and Kuwaitis are still able to work together in an Arab forum. There could be more diplomatic significance to this session than immediately meets the eye."

Last night, however, the main focus was on when the 2,600 Western and Japanese hostages would be able to leave Iraq and Kuwait. British Airways, which had a crew trapped by the invasion, swiftly sent a Boeing 767, but a British diplomat in Baghdad said the flight was extremely premature. "We haven't got people to put on it."

The Iraqi embassy in London said that all hostages had the right to leave immediately, and Latif Nassif al-Jassem, the information minister, said the freedom offer included those in hiding in Kuwait. "They must not be afraid." But the Foreign Office advised the 450 Britons in Kuwait to continue to lie low. They would be advised through the World Service when the government thought it safe for them to emerge.

The Foreign Office said that exit visas would probably not be available until the decree had been signed, and usually took five or six days to process. There has been no indication that the visa rule might be waived. However, Iraqi Airways has laid on a jumbo jet instead of the usual smaller aircraft for today's flight from Baghdad to Amman.

Fifty-five Britons are known to be in, and the government believes many others will need counselling to cope with psychological problems. Many are likely to return with no money or job, and some will have nowhere to live. In normal circumstances, people being repatriated are required to sign a form accepting that the costs could be reclaimed later. The Foreign Office said this had been waived, although in some cases employers may be asked to reimburse the government.

America announced last night that it would withdraw its diplomats from its besieged embassy in Kuwait after they had finished helping all Americans who wish to leave the country, although the mission would officially remain open. A decision on the diplomats in the British embassy was taken once all the hostages were out, but it is understood that John Weston, the ambassador, and Larry Banks, his sole remaining colleague, are willing to stay.

Democrats fear, page 8
Anthony Parsons, page 9
Letters, page 11



Honour for a lady: Margaret Thatcher at the RAF Museum, Hendon, after it was announced that she has been given the Order of Merit. Below: Mrs Thatcher, OM

Soviet military meetings fuel emergency rumours

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

SPECULATION has grown in Moscow in recent days that President Gorbachev is preparing to mobilise the Soviet army and interior ministry forces to impose a state of emergency, should the volatile situation in the country deteriorate.

The speculation began with the appointment of General Boris Gromov, a military commander as deputy interior minister last Sunday. It has since been fuelled by an unusual series of high-level military meetings, to discuss discipline in the armed forces and in the country at large.

On Tuesday and Wednesday

day a meeting of interior ministry officials and troops from all over the Soviet Union was held here to examine the "anticipation and curbing of mass disorders". The meeting warranted only a short report in the army paper, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), which said mass disorders were one of the factors which today made the Soviet Union so volatile.

The paper said the meeting had emphasised the "need to be tougher on the organisers and participants in mass disorders and speed up the drafting of new rules for the use of firearms and other special means by the police".

On Wednesday and Thursday Marshal Yazov, the defence minister, presided at a meeting of officers from the army, interior ministry troops, the KGB and the railway force. The meeting addressed an "appeal" to servicemen, their parents, and state and social organisations, pledging loyalty to the whole country, calling for public support and emphasising the "great consolidating potential" of the armed forces.

An extensive report on the Yazov meeting was published in *Krasnaya Zvezda* yesterday. While the talks appear to have concentrated on the social problems facing servicemen, it also seemed designed to boost morale in advance of proposed military reforms.

Yesterday, republic leaders were called to a top-level meeting at the defence ministry to hear about the military reform plans. A ministry spokesman denied reports that the meeting was to discuss co-ordinated action by the republics in the event of a

state of emergency being declared. He gave the not very convincing reason that "states of emergency" were enforced not by the regular army, but by interior ministry troops.

Mr Gorbachev has had since April the legitimate authority to impose a national state of emergency after parliament passed a law "on the legal introduction of states of emergency". As yet there is no hard evidence that he is considering this measure except as one of several options open to him as winter advances.

Mafia share-out, page 7
Saturday Review, page 10

Electricity breaks record

The electricity privatisation is now assured of a place in the record books, with more than 8 million applications processed by yesterday lunchtime and the total set to go as high as 12 million once counting is completed. Allocations will be heavily scaled back.

Details, page 32

England win

England beat New Zealand by four wickets in their second World Series Cup cricket match yesterday to avenge an earlier defeat.

Report, page 25

Tory lead

The Conservatives had an eight-point opinion poll lead over Labour last night in the BBC *Newsnight* Poll of Polls. Last month they were 14 points behind.

Sir Denis's lady to remain Mrs Thatcher, OM

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE Queen has awarded Margaret Thatcher, the longest serving of her nine prime ministers, the Order of Merit, the highest accolade for achievement that she can offer. At the same time John Major has created her husband Sir Denis Thatcher by the conferment of a hereditary baronetcy.

Lady Thatcher intends to remain in the Commons and would like to be known still as plain Mrs. She said yesterday that she was honoured and moved by the Queen's decision, and delighted and thrilled at the recognition of her husband's eleven years of support. Mrs Thatcher will receive her support in a private audience at Buckingham Palace on a date yet to be announced; Sir Denis will enjoy no ceremony, and will receive his letters patent in the post. Outgoing prime ministers are traditionally offered a life peerage, but Mrs Thatcher has always made it clear that she wishes

to remain in the lower house.

The Order of Merit, which was founded by King Edward VII in 1902, is in the personal gift of the sovereign, and is limited to 24 members, many of them outstanding figures in the arts and sciences. Previous prime ministerial holders were Lloyd George, Churchill, Attlee and Macmillan. The order has always been quick to recognise women; one of its first holders was Florence Nightingale.

Buckingham Palace said yesterday that the conferment of such an exclusive award on Mrs Thatcher was in recognition of her outstanding service as the Queen's prime minister for more than eleven years.

The OM brings only a badge on a blue and crimson ribbon, which Mrs Thatcher will doubtless display over formal evening dress. "It is limited to people of genuine merit, and carries no precedence, rank or title. It is, however, very prestigious indeed," David Williamson, co-editor of

Debrett, said yesterday. Although the highest award for tangible achievement in the Queen's gift the Order of Merit is still outranked by the higher orders of chivalry, notably the Garter, also limited to 24 members. Several previous prime ministers, including Lord Wilson of Rievaulx and Lord Callaghan of Cardiff, have been invested with the Garter by the Queen, but there is no vacancy.

There is no reason, however, why Mrs Thatcher could not be offered the Garter at some future date. For the time being she will be known, at her own wish, as the Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, OM, FRS, MP, or plain Mrs Thatcher to her friends. "That is how I have been known throughout my 31 years as an MP, and that is how I would like to continue to be known. I have done pretty well out of being Mrs Thatcher," she said yesterday.

Sir Denis's baronetcy, which although approved by the Queen is at the instigation of the incumbent

prime minister, is the first to be created since Sir Graeme Bell Finlay, a former Conservative chief whip, was so honoured in 1964. The baronetcy will pass down the Thatcher male line. On Sir Denis's death, his son will become Sir Mark Thatcher.

The other current holders of the Order of Merit are: the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, Dorothy Hodgkin, Lord Zuckerman, Lord Penney, Dame Veronica Wedgwood, Sir Isaiah Berlin, Sir George Edwards, Sir Alan Hodgkin, Lord Todd, Lord Franks, Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, Sir Andrew Huxley, Sir Sidney Nolan, Sir Michael Tippett, the Rev Prof Owen Chadwick, Graham Greene, Frederick Sanger, Sir Frank Whittle, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Prof Sir Ernst Gombrich, Dr Max Perutz, Dame Cicely Saunders, and Lord Porter of Luddenham. Mother Teresa is an honorary member.

Major interview, page 2

US and EC are blamed for Gatt failure

FROM PETER GUILFORD AND MICHAEL BINYON, BRUSSELS

THE world trade talks collapsed in a welter of recriminations yesterday after the failure of last-minute efforts to find a compromise on agriculture.

Negotiators will reconvene in Geneva next month, but the US has warned it will not attend unless a firmer basis for agreement had first been established. American negotiators said there was now a real danger that Congress would invoke protectionist powers to retaliate against trading partners.

Carla Hills, the US trade representative, accused the European Community of "economic warfare". Ray MacSharry, the EC agriculture commissioner, condemned the US for trying to "orchestrate a crisis" without any serious intention of working for agreement.

The collapse followed the EC's dismissal late on Thursday of a Swedish agriculture compromise which would have doubled overall farm cuts. The community insisted it was offering specific ceilings on subsidised food exports. It was also ready to boost farm imports by a further 3 per cent and drop plans for new oil-seeds tariffs.

But Neal Blewett, the Australian trade minister who spoke for the 14-nation Cairns group of leading farm exporters, said the EC had never even tabled its offer.

Frans Andriessen, the EC foreign trade commissioner, said the US had shown "no give and take" over agriculture. Both the US and the EC agreed progress had been made in other fields, including services and textiles, copyright and investment, and dispute procedures. The EC hopes the Geneva talks can build on this progress.

LONDON: Sir Simon Gourlay, the president of the National Farmers' Union, blamed the breakdown on the Americans and other countries which had consistently refused to enter into real negotiations on issues such as financial services, textiles, patents and trademarks (Michael Hornsby writes).

Lady Wilcox, the chairman of the National Consumer Council, thought the Americans had "behaved deplorably", but accused the EC of putting the negotiations in jeopardy to appease farmers, who accounted for only 8 per cent of the community's workforce and less than 3 per cent of its income.

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MP calls for root-and-branch reform of Commons hours



Harman: "Time to move out of 17th century"

By RICHARD FORD AND ROGER WOOD

PARLIAMENT'S working hours should be changed to encourage women to seek election and make MPs work more effectively, a Labour MP urged yesterday.

The Commons should rid itself of old-fashioned working practices and start operating like a modern legislature rather than a gentlemen's club, Harriet Harman told MPs. She said that while tradition was important it was time for Parliament "to move out of the 17th century, into the 20th century and prepare itself for the 21st century".

She said: "Some House of Commons traditions hold us back. We need to change to work more effectively. We can hardly tell business and industry that

they need to change their patterns of employment if we find it impossible to change our patterns of work." The shadow health minister said that the existing parliamentary hours were old-fashioned, deterred women from seeking election and "exiled" men from their families.

John MacGregor, Leader of the House, agreed on the need for more women in Parliament, but said that working hours were not the only obstacle. He said he was willing to consider proposals for change, but they had to make sure that reforms did not add to working hours instead of reducing them. Mr MacGregor is believed to be anxious to reform working practices but doubtful about the chances of improving the hours.

The House begins work at 2.30pm Monday to Thursday

with its earliest finishing time being 10.30pm. On many occasions sittings go on much later. On Friday the House sits from 9.30am until 3pm. However, standing committees discussing legislation and select committees scrutinising the work of departments do operate in the mornings on Monday to Thursday.

Miss Harman, who is married with three children, said that the best option for change would be for the Commons working day to be from 9.30am to 5.30pm. But she said this would cause difficulties from MPs from constituencies outside London who had to balance constituency work with commitments at Westminster. Her two alternatives are for the Commons to sit from 2.30pm to 10.30pm on Monday, from 11.30am to 7.30pm on Tuesday,

Wednesday and Thursday, and to sit from 9.30am to 3pm on Friday or from 11.30am to 7.30pm Monday to Thursday and from 9.30am to 3pm on Friday.

Criticising the existing Commons hours, Miss Harman said they deterred women from seeking entry to the House because they found it difficult to combine family responsibilities with the pattern of work. "One of the most awful things about this place is seeing male MPs speaking about the family, and what everyone else should be doing. But one of the preconditions for most people for coming into this place is abandoning their family, or in the case of male MPs, delegating it to their wives. People do not want to hear lessons on family life from people who would hardly recognise their own family were they not able to

look at their picture on their election addresses at general election time."

Miss Harman said that the after-dinner atmosphere in late debates reduced some arguments to a shambles and that very few MPs could claim to be "at their best" in the small hours of the morning.

Opponents of change argue that afternoon sittings allow time for committees to meet in the morning and for ministers to work at their desks in Whitehall. They also say it would limit the outside interests, particularly jobs, that MPs could hold.

Rejecting these arguments, Miss Harman said ministers rarely attended the House for questions other than those involving their own department; members on committees already had to

choose between attending the chamber or committee when there was an afternoon session of their committee and that it was ludicrous to flame working hours to suit MPs with outside interests.

Parliamentary hours vary enormously among member states of the European Community. In Denmark the parliament sits at 1pm on Tuesday and Wednesday, at 10am on Thursday and at 10am or 11am on Friday. The Italian and French parliaments start at 9.30am. The German at 9am, in the United States at 11am or 12 noon, in Greece at 6pm unless there is a key bill. In Spain, the Speaker decides the timetable but important debates start in the afternoon while in Ireland, the Dail sits on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 10.30am.

British Rail gives go-ahead for first freight village

By MICHAEL DYNES, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S first purpose-built Channel tunnel rail freight terminal, capable of handling up to 800,000 tonnes of exports and imports a year, will be built in Wakefield, south of Leeds, British Rail announced yesterday.

The new £200 million, 200-acre complex, which will include gantry cranes for switching containers from road to rail, warehousing facilities, and local delivery services, is the first of up to 12 regional freight terminals British Rail is planning to build throughout the UK.

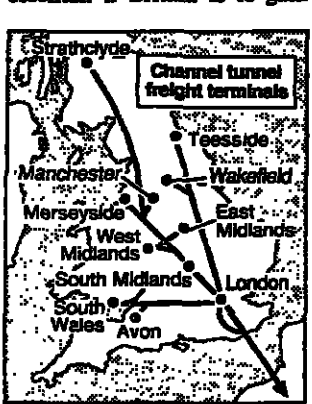
Each terminal, known as a regional freight village, will offer British industry fast, regular, and efficient rail freight services to many European destinations. When complete, the network of freight villages could remove more than 400,000 lorry journeys each year from Britain's congested road network.

A typical rail freight journey between Wakefield and Milan, for example, will take 36 hours, reducing present road freight journey times by two days, thereby making rail

freight competitive with road freight for the first time since the construction of the national motorway system.

British Rail is at present negotiating with prospective private-sector partners over possible locations for the remaining freight villages, which are being planned for Strathclyde, Merseyside, Teesside, Manchester, the East, West, and South Midlands, South Wales, the West Country, and London.

The freight villages are seen by manufacturing industry as essential if Britain is to gain



and increase its access to continental markets after 1992. Some critics of the scheme insist, however, that freight villages will be insufficient to prevent the marginalisation of local economies in the north of England and Scotland.

John Prescott, Labour's transport spokesman, has said that while Britain's track gauge is the same as continental track gauge, Britain's loading gauge, which governs the height and width of the wagons that can be taken through tunnels, under bridges, and past line-side structures, is considerably smaller than on the continent. Consequently, there is a danger that freight arriving by rail from the continent will be forced to switch to the roads before it arrives in Britain.

British Rail says that construction of a "continental gauge" railway running from the Channel tunnel up the spine of Britain would be prohibitively expensive, commercially unviable and would take decades to complete. By contrast, the rail freight village network can be in place when the Channel tunnel begins services in 1993, and at a fraction of the cost of the more ambitious schemes.

British Rail says, however, that because of restrictions in the Channel Tunnel Act, which prohibits the use of subsidies for the development of international passenger and freight services, the regional rail freight terminals will be built only if they can be proved to be viable.

The Wakefield terminal is expected to create up to 4,000 jobs, which could increase to 10,000 if it succeeds in attracting new businesses. The announcement was greeted with enthusiasm in Wakefield, an area which lost some 17,000 jobs during the 1980s because of the contraction of the coal industry.

Ian Brown, British Rail's rail freight director, said: "This is an exciting vision for the future. We believe that the Port Wakefield freight village will be a springboard for new opportunities, helping our customers to develop and add value to their businesses."

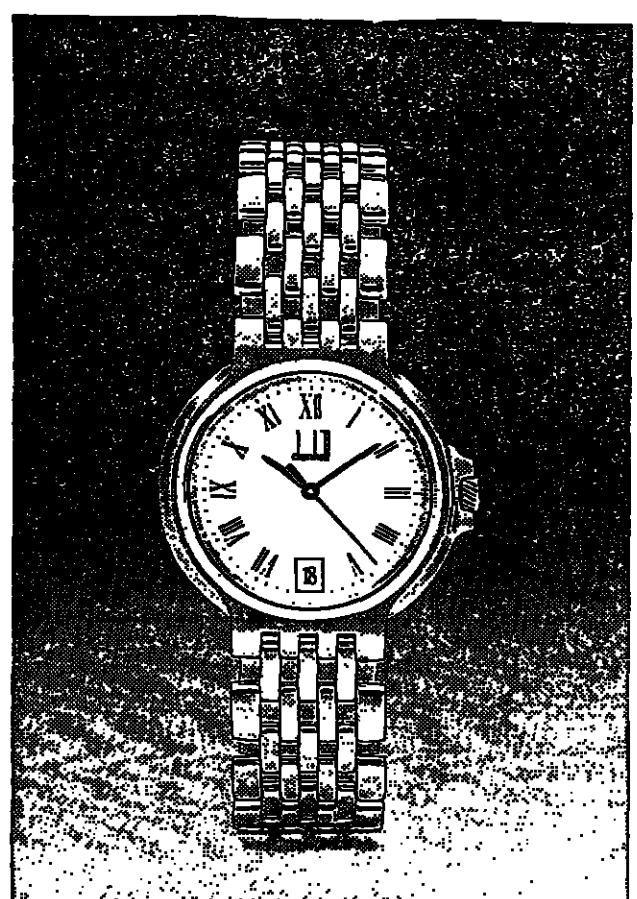
Hundreds brave cold to aid the homeless

HUNDREDS of people in 41 towns and cities slept out in the open last night on one of the coldest nights of the year to highlight the plight of Britain's estimated 150,000 who do not have a roof over their heads (David Young writes).

Glenda Jackson, the actress, had to drop plans to launch the start of the sleep-out in an east London park because of her mother's death, but in other towns dozens of people spent the night in parks and on town hall steps. The organ-

isers, Homes for Homeless People (formerly the National Cymenians), had hoped that Ms Jackson, the prospective Labour candidate for Hampstead and Highgate, would help to publicise the sleep-out in Cissold Park, Hackney, but Brian Murphy, star of television comedies, who lives in the area, took her place.

In York, however, a group of local solicitors who took part were told by their local MP, Conal Gregory, that there was no problem in the city.



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dunhill

VISIT ALFRED DUNHILL IN LONDON AT DUFF STREET ST JAMES'S. THE RUPINGTON ARCADE 5 SLOANE STREET AND AT ALFRED DUNHILL IN HARRODS AND SELFLEDGES WATCHES ALSO AVAILABLE AT WATCHES OF SWITZERLAND LTD, THE GOLDSMITH GROUP HARRODS WATCH DEPARTMENT AND LEADING JEWELLERS

Mystery of extra crew on flight

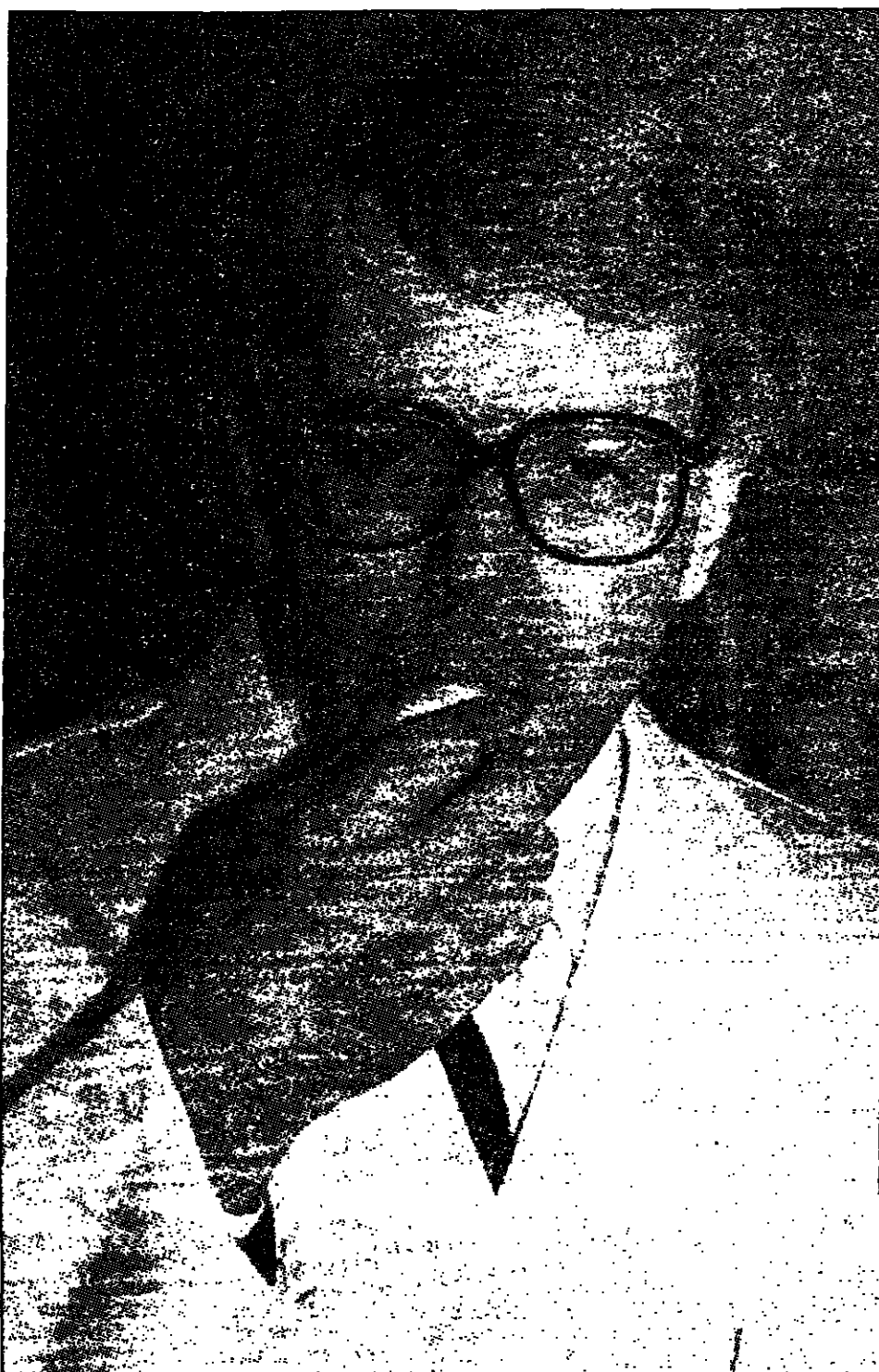
By KERRY GILL

THE mystery over the identity of the extra crew member on the Pan Am flight that was blown up over Lockerbie remained unsolved last night as the judicial enquiry was adjourned until January 22.

The Dumfries enquiry was told that there should have been 12 cabin attendants on flight 103 to New York on December 21, 1988, but it was discovered that a thirteenth crew member was on board when it left Heathrow.

Michael Sullivan, the airline's director of flight services at Heathrow, said he found out when he checked the purser's list after the bombing in which 270 people died. He said the normal cabin crew for a Boeing 747 was 13, but there should have been only 12 on that flight because of the number of passengers.

The question about the crew emerged when Mr Sullivan was cross-examined by Marina de Larracochea, whose sister Nieves, aged 39, was a stewardess on the flight. Asked why there had been 13, Mr Sullivan said he did not know. Miss de Larracochea asked if it was possible that an extra person could arrive at the airport and, without anyone else knowing, join the flight crew. Mr Sullivan replied: "It should not happen, but it appears to have happened in this case."



Mr Major tasting the produce of a mushroom farm near Peterborough yesterday

Major is content to remain the same plain 'plug-ugly'

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN Major told the world yesterday that he intended to remain the same "plug-ugly" that he always had been.

On his local radio station the prime minister dismissed any suggestions that he would allow the image-makers to get at him. But his disparaging description of himself sent Westminster observers to the dictionary. Had Mr Major inadvertently lifted a veil on a hitherto concealed part of his past? Plug-ugly, says Collins, means "extremely ugly." However, it is also American slang for a city tough or ruffian and was originally applied to "ruffians in New York who attempted to exert political pressure."

The prime minister's rise to the top appears to have been blameless. He has certainly made few enemies on the way. If he has used rough tactics nobody seems to have noticed. It seems, therefore, that he must have been recalling a description used by his father, Tom Major, of the vaudeville-double-act Drum and Major, who toured musical halls and circuses in America as well as Britain.

Whatever the source, the remark shows Mr Major's determination to stay as he is and casts even greater doubt on reported recent sightings of Sir Gordon Reece and Tim Bell, Mrs Thatcher's PR handlers, near Downing Street.

He said of image-makers: "They have neither approached me, nor are they going to get at me. I shall be the same plug-ugly that I always was." The lowering of his voice, which some have noted, was due to a cold, he said. "Even chancellors and prime ministers are not immune from the common cold. I am what I am and people will

have to take me as I am. The image-makers will not find me under their tutelage."

Given Mr Major's desire to do things his way it was in keeping that he should give his first lengthy broadcast interview since his election to BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, which covers his constituency.

Yesterday he made his first public appearance there since becoming prime minister. He opened a packaging department at a mushroom plant near Peterborough.

Later most of Ginton in Cambridgeshire turned out to watch him plant a tree marking the connection of the village to the gas network. Peter Grindrod, the primary school headmaster, said none of his pupils was old enough to have seen a male prime minister before. "The question has even been asked whether a man was allowed to be prime minister."

Under cross examination on the fifth day of her High Court libel action against the *News of the World*, Mrs Sutcliffe said: "My view of this, and also in this instance there is police research, is that when my husband killed these people... he was in the belief that those people were immoral, and he had a mission, and he was saving their souls from leading the sort of lives they were leading."

"I think not 'The Ripper', because my husband believed he killed them humanely in that when he took a hammer to the back of their heads they died instantly and he did not torture them when they were alive. That was his understanding."

Mrs Sutcliffe, aged 40, of Bradford, West Yorkshire, is suing the newspaper over an article alleging that she had an affair during a Greek holiday with George Papadimitriou, described by the paper as a double of her husband.

She was being questioned by Barbara Jones, a journalist, who went with Mrs Sutcliffe on the holiday and has been joined to the court action by the paper.

The hearing resumes on Monday.

Suicide inmate 'was fine' on the day before

By QUENTIN COWDRY, HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

A SCHOOLBOY who hanged himself in Swansea jail, south Wales, had seemed perfectly normal 24 hours before his death, a prison doctor told an inquest yesterday.

Dr Russell Jones said prison staff disagreed with the opinion of social workers and probation officers that Philip Knight, aged 15, was a suicide risk. He claimed an earlier incident, in which the boy had slashed one of his wrists, had been a "formal expression of resentment and anger."

Dr Jones was giving evidence on the second day of the inquest into the death of the schoolboy who was found hanging from a knotted sheet in his cell in July after being remanded on theft charges. He told the inquest that he saw nothing in the boy's mood the day before to suggest that he might commit suicide. The jail's suicide prevention group had found it "most disconcerting" that an inmate's mood could change so quickly.

However, the court heard

new evidence yesterday about concern over the boy's well-being in jail. Joseph Dowdall, principal child care officer for Dyfed county council, told the inquest on Thursday that social workers had relayed their fears to prison staff on the day the teenager entered the prison. However, no extra precautions had apparently been taken.

John Morgan, the West Glamorgan coroner, asked him: "In your professional judgment, you never considered him to be a suicide risk?" The doctor replied: "Yes, that is correct."

The court has heard that the boy, who was adopted, was taken into care in June 1989. He subsequently made 11 attempts to escape from children's homes.

Penal reformers yesterday urged the Home Office not to "sit on" a report by Judge Stephen Tumim, the chief inspector of prisons, which calls for urgent action to reduce the level of suicides.

The Home Office received the report about a week ago, but it is understood publication will not be before the New Year. It is understood Judge Tumim will claim the suicide toll reflects the poor conditions many inmates suffer, and the unacceptably high number of people in jail with mental disorders. He will also call for a tightening of suicide prevention measures.

Sutcliffe no ripper, wife says

By PAUL WILKINSON

PETER Sutcliffe did not deserve to be called the Yorkshire Ripper because he killed his 13 victims humanely in an attempt to save their souls, his wife Sonia said yesterday.

Under cross examination on the fifth day of her High Court libel action against the *News of the World*, Mrs Sutcliffe said: "My view of this, and also in this instance there is police research, is that when my husband killed these people... he was in the belief that those people were immoral, and he had a mission, and he was saving their souls from leading the sort of lives they were leading."

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Unionist's gesture to republic

A former Unionist Lord Mayor of Belfast is urging the city council to invite the new president of the Irish Republic to a civic reception.

The move by Councillor John Carson has divided the loyalist-controlled council but stands little chance of being accepted. Yesterday he announced his intention to table a motion next month proposing that Mary Robinson, who took office in Dublin on Monday, be invited to the city early in the new year.

Palace intruder

A man was arrested by armed members of the royal and diplomatic protection squad in the grounds of Buckingham Palace yesterday afternoon and taken to Bow Street police station. It is thought he scaled a wall to get in the grounds. He is expected to be charged over the incident. A palace spokesman said that the Queen was not at home at the time, though the Duke of York may have been.

Attack on fans

A Metropolitan policeman working under cover among Arsenal football fans took part in a motorway attack on rival Tottenham supporters, a court heard yesterday. PC Michael Harris, aged 27, of Grays, Essex, helped to force off the road a car with Tottenham supporters. Knutford crown court was told, dismissing his appeal against an earlier conviction for reckless driving and a suspended jail term.

Hospital dispute

Staff at Britain's three high security mental hospitals will be locked out by management today unless they undertake to work normally after a dispute over travel allowances. Male nurses at Ashworth, Merseyside, staged a sit-down strike yesterday when three men were suspended. Similar action was planned today at Rampton hospital, Nottingham, and possibly at Broadmoor, Berkshire.

Chalker rewarded with extra duties

By ANDREW MCEWEN, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

A BIG increase in the responsibilities of Lynda Chalker was announced yesterday, eight days after she turned down a seat in the cabinet and the deputy chairmanship of the Conservative Party.

She retains her job as minister for overseas development but also takes on five departments of the Foreign Office, covering the whole of the Commonwealth and sub-Saharan Africa. The move combines the subjects that interest her most, and goes a long way towards explaining her decision to stay out of the cabinet.

Her extra duties stem not from the leadership change but from Sir Geoffrey Howe's resignation from the cabinet, which caused a reshuffle. William Waldegrave, whose responsibilities included Africa, left the foreign office to become health secretary and was replaced by Douglas Hogg.

Douglas Hogg, the foreign secretary, decided to redistribute the portfolios of the five ministers under him, rewarding Mrs Chalker for hard work and ability. He knew that Africa was her favourite subject, and that she knew more about it than any other minister. It was her responsibility before she became minister for overseas development. The Commonwealth fitted naturally with it because many of the sub-Saharan nations are Commonwealth members.

Mrs Chalker knew that this had been decided before John Major called her to Downing Street. The question was not whether she would be prepared to give up the new (but unannounced) role to take on the deputy chairmanship, but whether she could do both.

Mrs Chalker is understood to have decided that this would be impractical. As minister for overseas development she spends up to 100 days a year travelling abroad. The deputy chairmanship



Chalker: turned down seat in the cabinet

would have required her to travel a lot within Britain.

The decision will be welcomed at the foreign office, where Mrs Chalker is regarded highly. The departments under her wing cover the Commonwealth and central, east, west and southern Africa. She remains Mr Hurd's deputy at the foreign office.

One of the new government's "wettest" ministers, Sir George Young, housing

and planning minister, last night appointed Gerald Howarth, a right-wing member of the No-Turning Back Group and former committee member of the Monday Club, as his parliamentary aide (John Winder writes).

Also last night, Michael Heseltine, environment secretary, announced that William Powell, Conservative MP for Corby and one of his active supporters in the leadership campaign, is to be his parliamentary private secretary. Both jobs are unpaid but seen as valuable stepping-stones to higher office.

Mr Howarth has been an MP since 1983, representing Cannock and Burntwood. He already has experience at the environment department as an aide to Michael Spicer.

Mr Powell's previous specialisations in his seven years in the Commons have been in foreign affairs. He is a barrister and has been parliamentary private secretary to the minister for overseas development.

Seven beat...

Balkan...

Incident...

Art is still smart...

Test Select...

Seven officers who beat man in pub brawl are dismissed

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

SEVEN police officers accused of attacking and beating a man unconscious after a brawl in a public house were last night thrown out of the Metropolitan police for discreditable conduct. Sir John Dellow, the deputy commissioner, accepted a disciplinary tribunal recommendation calling for the men to be dismissed.

The dismissals are the largest number in recent Yard history. Last night a Yard spokesman said: "This represents the intention of the whole Metropolitan police from every police constable up to the top to rid itself of officers who abuse their positions of trust. Behaviour like this will not be tolerated. Officers need to know they are working alongside decent, honest, respectable people."

The men, who had been suspended on full pay since shortly after the attack at the Limes public house in Hackney, east London, three years ago, are Alan Barr, Paul Cassidy, Peter Clissold, Paul Wells, David Thompson, Simon Haw and Carl Simon. All were constables in their 20s at City Road police station and were yesterday removed from the police pay-roll.

The tribunal, including two members of the Police Complaints Authority and Terry Siggs, a deputy assistant commissioner, last month found the officers guilty after hearing of events while they were off duty in November

1987. The men denied the allegations. According to evidence an argument developed in the public house and Gary Stretch, a driver from Hoxton, east London, was set upon. Mr Stretch, aged 27, was hit over the head with a broken beer glass, which partially severed his ear, dragged outside and kicked unconscious.

He was temporarily blinded by the beating, and spent five days in hospital while his ear was stitched up and his neck put in a brace. At one stage he was told he could face charges. The officers have remained suspended on full pay, totalling £300,000, since shortly after the complaint.

In January 1989, the Director of Public Prosecutions decided there was insufficient evidence to prosecute. The Police Complaints Authority then supervised the inquiry by Scotland Yard's investigation

Bureau which led to the tribunal hearing. The seven tried to halt the tribunal by appealing to the High Court earlier this year claiming too much time has passed since the incident but they lost the case.

Raju Bhatt, Mr Stretch's solicitor, said yesterday his client was dissatisfied with the delays in the case. "If this case shows anything at all, it is the inadequacies of the whole system which is available for people who suffer police wrongdoing," he said. Mr Stretch is bringing a civil action against police for assault, wrongful arrest and false imprisonment.

Mike Bennett, chairman of the Metropolitan branch of the Police Federation, said officers had little faith in the disciplinary system, which they did not believe was fair or independent. "I know some of the seven feel they have been very badly treated. There are two sides to the story but the tribunal decided they were not fit to be police officers and we have to accept that decision."

The seven may appeal against their dismissal and have 21 days to lodge notice with Kenneth Baker, the home secretary. He will then appoint a tribunal consisting of a QC, a retired chief constable and a retired officer up to the rank of inspector, which is likely to order a rehearing of evidence. The tribunal then reports its conclusions to Mr Baker to make a final decision.



Dellow: accepted plea to remove constables

Balkan connection alert for Interpol

By OUR CRIME CORRESPONDENT

EARLY next year the head of every national drugs squad in Europe will gather at Interpol headquarters in Lyons, France, for an emergency meeting. Only one subject will be on the agenda: how to stem the flow of heroin pouring into Europe from Turkey.

This week's discovery by customs officers at Dover of a record 203 kilos of heroin hidden in a lorry from Turkey will raise few eyebrows in Lyons. Over the past year drugs squads have been alert to the risk of Turkish heroin flooding into western Europe and the growth of the Balkan route.

Last spring analysts warned that between 70 and 80 per cent of the heroin reaching European markets was produced by clandestine laboratories in eastern Turkey. The warning was timely. Over the summer months Interpol officials have been alarmed by drugs seizures in Europe as

traffickers targeted Italy, Spain, Germany and Britain.

In this country alone customs officers have seized over 300 kilos of Turkish heroin in recent months, compared with a haul of 331 kilos of heroin for the whole of last year. Last June a full-time British customs liaison officer was sent to Turkey.

The heroin is not Turkish in origin, although the country does grow some opium poppy crops. The opium source lies in the Golden Crescent, the frontier areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Raw opium is smuggled to Turkey for processing before distribution.

The biggest problem for investigators lies in plugging the smuggling routes. A long-distance lorry can drive from Istanbul to Amsterdam, the main drugs entrepôt for Europe, on 2187 miles of arterial road. The lorries can slip from Turkey, through Bulgaria, into Yugoslavia and then via Austria into the EC. An alternative route passes through Hungary and Czechoslovakia into Germany. Last year a key checkpoint between Austria and Germany handled 4,900,000 vehicles, including 380,000 long-distance lorries.

The Interpol meeting could be crucial. One official said yesterday that with free trade and movement between east and west already under way, drug trafficking could become the most profitable illegal enterprise in Europe.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Ingham the loyal leaker

"Heath and Whitelaw were like schoolboys trying to suppress a fit of the giggles at morning assembly. Ingham, even redder in the face than usual, made his way back to his pew. After the service he slipped away through the throng of journalists and politicians and was lost in the crowd on Fleet Street."

Robert Harris, from his authorised biography of Bernard Ingham, in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow.

Art is still smart

"And we are not talking about any old private views, with warm white wine and soggy Ritz crackers, held in those funny parts of London that aren't in W1, or SW something-or-other. A commissionaire stands at the portals to keep out the riff-raff..."

Kate Saunders on stylish art, in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow.

Test Selector

Win up to £6,000 in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow by playing the ultimate cricket game. Tomorrow's Test Selector is Greg Chappell.

ELVIS goes for £66,000

ANSON Lane, a businessman who does not own a car, yesterday bought the ultimate in pop music number plates - ELV 1S.

Mr Lane, an avid fan of the late Elvis Presley, paid £66,000 for the number. "I have a leased company car so now I will have to go out and buy a car of my own. A pink Cadillac would seem appropriate," he said.

Mr Lane, aged 47, a computer information systems manager, of Brighton, said: "I applied to the Government to buy the ELV 1S plate in 1976 but they refused to sell it. It has been a long wait." The number had been expected to break the record of £176,000, which was paid for 1A last December.

Nearly 800 people attended the sale at Christie's of 69 registration numbers by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA), which raised a total of £1,313,950 with buyers' premium. The highest price paid was £88,000 for the number 1S which went to an unknown buyer. All prices were subject to 15 per cent VAT.

The prime minister missed out on the sale of MAJ 1D which went for £24,000 and the chancellor was not there to bid for TAX 1T which fetched £8,250. 1S VAT (£5,500) and DEB 1T (£8,800). Other numbers sold included SUS 1E for £35,000, 300 SL (£60,500), 1GG (£21,000), 1SPV (£16,000), H2 EAU (£10,000).

Pay as you earn told very plainly

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE Inland Revenue and the Department of Social Security are to receive awards on Monday from the Plain English Campaign for producing forms that are easily understood.

It is the second time both organisations have gained the honour, although their representatives have in the past been given the campaign's Golden Bull awards for unintelligible gobbledegook.

The Inland Revenue's award is for PAYE form P161, *Getting a Pension for the first time*. The social security's commendation is for a pack explaining attendance allowances.

The four other organisations winning Plain English awards this year are Customs and Excise for a leaflet explaining customs allowances; the Department of National Savings for a staff guide entitled *Writing Plain English in National Savings*; the Employment Service, for leaflets dealing with disability and employment; and Welwyn Hatfield council, for a housing handbook.

Certificates will be presented by Willie Rushon, the comedian and cartoonist, in London on Monday,

but he will also be handing out seven new Golden Bulls.

One goes to Banbury Homes and Gardens of Oxford, which sent a customer a 13-line letter that could have been contained in three lines. Another goes to the Department of Employment, nominated by Alice Mahon, the Labour MP.

Dominion Insurance Company managed to create confusion in comparatively few words, writing: "We consider only work that is normally carried out by an insured to be work that is capable of delegation and not work that is of a different nature from that they carry out."

Municipal General Insurance Ltd, another winner, contributed: "Please note that due to a new system, the first call will be on or within seven days of the renewal date of your policy, but the last call for this year [sic] premium will be one month before expiry date. This differs to last year when the first call was at the beginning of the following month and the last call at the beginning of the month of expiry of your policy. Consequently two calls may be made in one month."



By horse to petition for stag hunting

Anthony Trollope, chairman of the Quantock Staghounds, riding through London yesterday with his wife Annabel to deliver petitions to the National Trust urging it not to ban deer hunting on land it controls.

Last month members passed a vote calling for a ban at the trust's annual general meeting, and next week the matter is to be discussed by the 52-man governing council of the trust (Michael McCarthy writes). Although the vote is not binding, the council will be under pressure to take account of it.

A ban would mean an end to stag hunting in Somerset's Quantocks, and would threaten the sport of another pack, which hunts on Exmoor. The third West Country pack, Tiverton, is not likely to be affected.

The petitions, one signed by 250 landowners, the other by 3,700 local people, say that without the controlling influence of stag hunting the deer would not survive.

Dolphin dispute over

ROCKY the veteran dolphin could be flying off to a new life in the Caribbean by Christmas, animal welfare campaigners claimed after a court hearing yesterday.

Mr Justice Harman, the High Court judge asked to settle the dispute over the 23-year-old dolphin, accepted an undertaking from the Flamingo Land aquarium in North Yorkshire and its owner Peter Bloom that, subject to Ministry of Agriculture

regulations, they would not prevent the animal welfare organisation Zoo Check from flying the dolphin to the Turks and Caicos islands.

The judge cancelled an emergency injunction granted last Saturday which prevented Flamingo Land from interfering with Zoo Check's plans. He made no further order in the case after counsel for Flamingo Land gave the undertaking and said it had no claim on Rocky.

Judge attacks 'waste' of 2p trial

A SENIOR judge at the central criminal court yesterday criticised the thousands of pounds of public money wasted in bringing to trial a man who refused to pay a 2p bill.

Judge Bruce Laugherland, QC, said at the conclusion of the two-day case: "Each court costs at least £25 a minute to run, not including counsel and solicitor's fees. Pursuing this matter and holding a trial by jury was an unjustified waste

of public time and money." This will cost the taxpayer an estimated £13,500.

The court heard that Keith Gonaz, aged 31, of central London, filled up his car with £10 worth of petrol but accidentally put in an extra 2p worth. When he refused to pay the two pence, an argument followed with the cashier at the garage in Hackney, north London.

Gonaz pointed his rolled-up umbrella at the cashier and

made a machine gun noise and drove off. The cashier pressed the panic button, which alerted police, and Gonaz was arrested a few minutes later.

The incident resulted in his being charged with possessing an imitation firearm, affray and threatening behaviour. The judge ordered not guilty verdicts to be entered for affray and the firearms charge. Gonaz was found not guilty of threatening behaviour.

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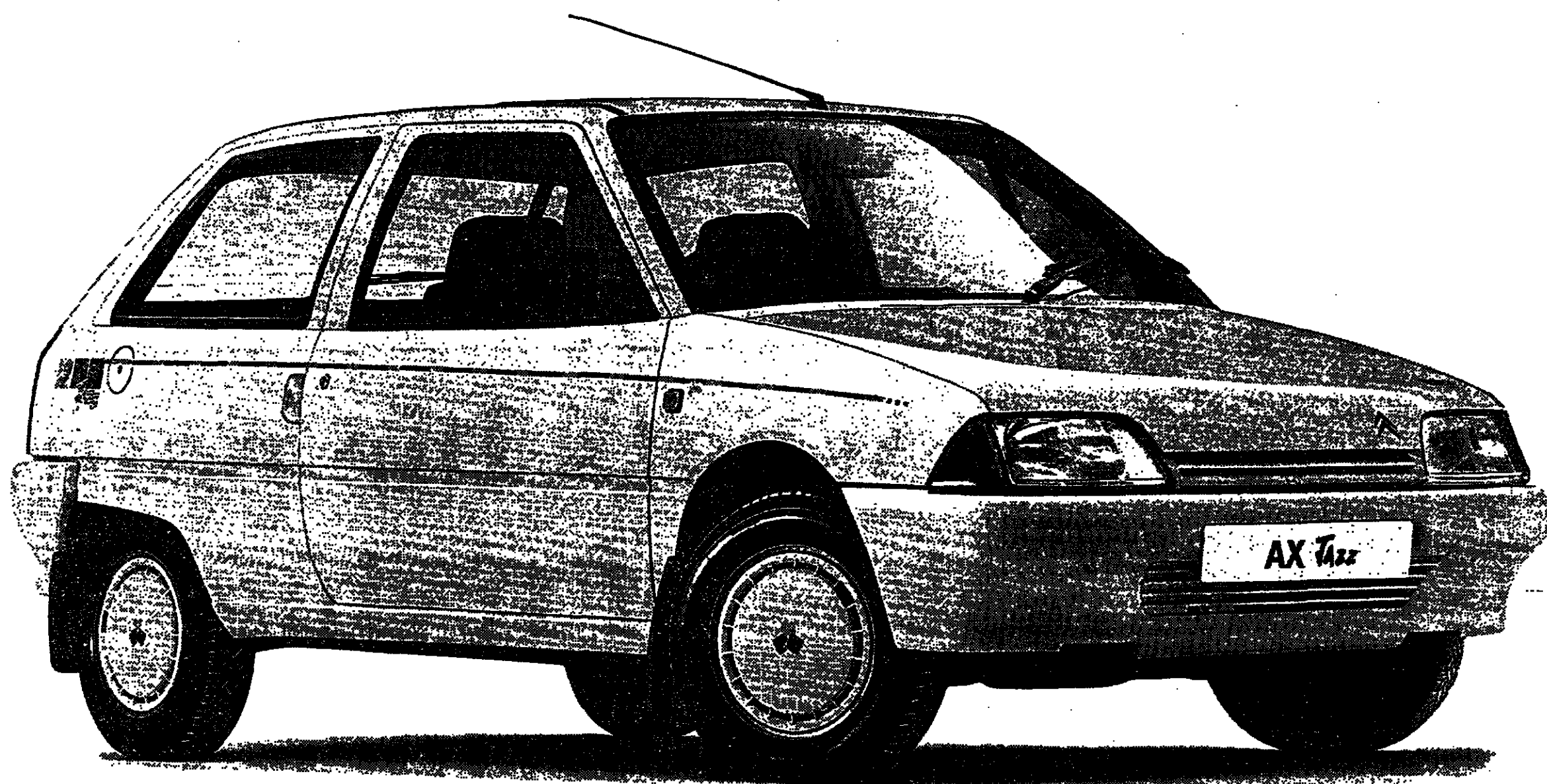
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Heseltine told that poll tax changes now may raise bills

By DOUGLAS BROOM, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL Heseltine, the environment secretary, was warned yesterday that any major changes to the community charge system before next April would increase poll tax bills for most people.

Although Mr Heseltine has said that it may take up to two years to reform the poll tax he is known to be considering short-term measures to iron out some of the unfairness in the system before next year's bills go out. The prospect of an early general election is concentrating attention on the need to make the tax more palatable to the electorate.

Next April's bills could well be the last before the country goes to the polls.

However, the Conservative-controlled Association of District Councils said yesterday that only straightforward reforms could be accommodated "at this late stage in the local government financial process." The association said that substantial changes would mean late bills and reduced cash flow, forcing councils to borrow on the money markets to make up the shortfall.

The Audit Commission said last month that high levels of

non-payment this year were partly the result of late billing caused by last minute changes in the poll tax system by the government.

The association said yesterday that non-payment this year would add £47 a head to next year's poll tax bills and predicted that the effect of serious delays next April would be worse still.

Mr Heseltine's options for changes that would affect next year's bills are severely limited. Most observers believe that he will go for changes in the benefit rules to help the least well off. This would not only prevent additional government money fuelling higher spending by councils but would also be cheaper.

Exempting all those who currently pay only 20 per cent of the charge would cost £500 million. By contrast it would cost £1 billion to reduce average bills by £28 a head through additional central grant to local authorities.

David Thorpe, a director of Bull computers, which supplies poll tax collection systems for 35 authorities, including Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford and Liverpool, said: "Any changes would produce a knife-edge situation for some councils. The first poll tax instalments are due in April and if the bills do not go out in time the consequences are very serious indeed. They lose a whole month's income."

The situation will be made worse next year by the government's decision not to repeat a scheme operated this year by which councils got the bulk of their central grant in the first half of the financial year to cushion late payment.

Bull will be sending out its software package to councils on January 15, and councils expect to be able to issue bills in mid-March in time for the first instalment payment on April 1.

Ian Denholm, a director of McDonnell Douglas which supplies computer systems to 50 local authorities said: "Anything other than the very simplest change would not be ready in time for the bills to go out in March."

Court at Grantham jails charge evader

By DAVID YOUNG

GRANTHAM, still best known as the birthplace of Britain's first woman prime minister, has now gained notoriety by becoming the first town to jail a citizen for non-payment of the poll tax.

Bryan Wright, an unemployed builder, of Grantham, Lincolnshire, was jailed for 21 days yesterday for what Jill Speechley, the Grantham magistrate, described as "his wilful refusal and culpable neglect" to pay his community charge.

He admitted owing a total debt of £345.21, which includes legal and bailiffs costs. The poll tax set by the local South Kesteven council is £277, one of the lowest in the country.

Mr Wright, a single man in his twenties who lives with his parents, told the court that he had been out of work since last week following a driving ban being imposed in the same court. Miss Speechley said that the figures he gave showed that until this week he had £50 a week disposable income from which he should have paid his community charge.

The All Britain Anti Poll Tax Federation said yesterday that it is planning to stage a mass demonstration in Grantham next weekend to

press for the release of Mr Wright and is also to ask Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, to intervene.

Steve Nally, the federation's secretary, said that his organisation, which has already held demonstrations at the court, regarded the prison sentence on Mr Wright as a barbaric medieval measure. "No one in this day and age should be sent to prison for poverty, especially as the whole issue of the poll tax is now under review," he said.

"It is ridiculous that Mr Wright should face spending Christmas in prison when the poll tax is now seen as having been discredited."

A spokesman for South Kesteven District Council said: "We take no delight in being the first council to take the action which led to a defaulter being put behind bars. We would rather be the first council to have everyone pay up. But we hope this action will act as a warning to others. We feel that many people could now find the money and pay the tax."

Gary Freeman, secretary of the Nottingham Anti-Poll-Tax Union, said the council would find themselves subjected to "a campaign like they have never known before."

Trial date fixed for Scargill

ARTHUR Scargill, the miners' leader, and Peter Heathfield, secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, are to face trial on charges of failing to keep proper union records.

Magistrates in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, yesterday adjourned the cases and fixed June 17 for the hearing. It is expected to last a week.

Mr Scargill is accused of wilfully neglecting to ensure proper records were kept and aiding and abetting Mr Heathfield in doing so. Mr Heathfield is accused of failing as an NUM officer to discharge his duty in relation to the union's accounts.

The NUM is charged with not keeping proper accounts, and not maintaining a satisfactory system of control and accounting records.

Tourist attraction to go underground

By RONALD FAUX

DEVELOPERS of a Cumbrian centre designed to attract tourists away from the overcrowded "honeypots" and into the neglected northern fringe of the Lake District propose to bury the scheme beneath a field to pacify local objectors.

"There will be nothing to see but rolling grass, grazing sheep and an inoffensive cave entrance. Nothing else will strike the eye," John Dunning, director of Westmorland Motorway Services, said. The company has put the scheme to the Eden district planning department.

Beneath the field at Slapstones near Penrith there is planned a £6 million development covering almost six acres that would promote the culture and explain the her-

itage of Cumbria. The three levels of the development in a man-made 50ft high cavern would contain conference rooms, display areas, shops and a restaurant.

"The centre would point to the many leisure and tourist attractions this area offers and the artistic and craft activity that goes on," Mr Dunning said. Consultant to the scheme is the architect Arthur Quarby, an enthusiast for "earth sheltered" structures.

The Slapstones centre would employ about 100, but it faces strong objection from residents in the village of Stainton near by. They say they would not welcome any commercial intrusion in open countryside or the dirt and disturbance that 400,000 visitors would bring.

Experts say Mersey barrage plan would endanger ships

QUEUES of a hundred ships could occur on the Mersey if plans to build a barrage to generate electricity from the tides are given parliamentary approval, a report disclosed yesterday.

A team of Dutch consultants, which carried out research commissioned by the river's three main shipping users' groups, concluded that the barrage might also increase navigational dangers, lead to heavy build-up of silt, and undermine the economy of docks near by. The users' groups announced that they would seek talks with Malcolm Rifkind, the transport secretary, to discuss their concerns.

The report, compiled by Port Advisory Services with Delta University and Delft Hydraulics Laboratory, said: "In the construction stages ships will encounter high current velocities, not only in front of the locks but also in parts of the shipping lanes." It added: "This will require high-speed ships, which will mean that tugs will be unable to control a vessel in the case of an engine or rudder failure." The Mersey Barrage Company (MBC), a consortium of more than 20 local and national companies, hopes to lay a bill before Par-

liament next year to build a £800 million power scheme to produce "clean" electricity from the river's tides.

Backers of the scheme believe that the project will also play a key role in revitalising one of the country's more depressed areas by creating thousands of jobs in construction, tourism and leisure. It would be the first electricity-generating barrage in Britain and could act as a catalyst for other schemes around Britain's coast.

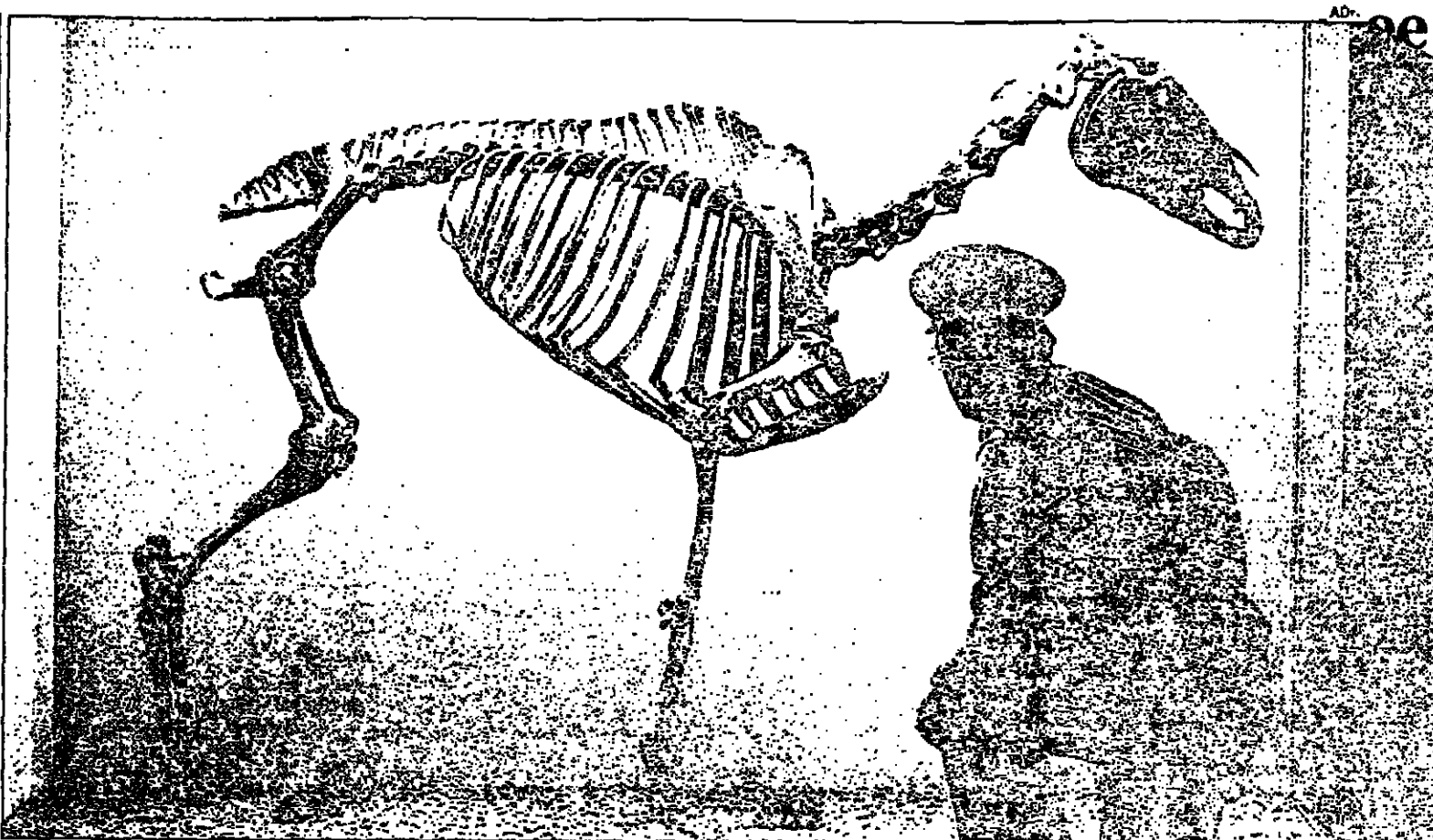
James McCormack, general manager of the barrage company, said that he had issued instructions for experts to compare the Dutch findings with those of engineers working with river barrages in Europe and the United States. He said that many of the apparent problems identified by the users' consultants had already been addressed by their own team. "We believe the latest design changes, which re-

locate the turbines and revise the sluices proposed, already answer many of the criticisms," Mr McCormack said.

The company had recognised from the outset that the 700-megawatt scheme, capable of saving 750,000 tonnes of coal a year, would only get parliamentary approval with the support of local interests. The new study, however, commissioned by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, the Manchester Ship Canal Company, and Shell UK, estimated that up to 30 potentially dangerous incidents could occur annually after construction of the barrage.

The researchers said that such incidents could arise through the operation of the tidal barrage's turbines and sluices, as well as from shifts in currents, tides and eddies caused during the barrage's construction. Other fears concerned dangers to shipping from floating construction equipment and craft.

The findings are expected to be passed through the transport department to an exceptional ministerial committee that is examining the effects of the scheme on employment and the environment as well as technical difficulties.



Rome's horse: The skeleton of Napoleon's favourite charger, Marengo, went on show yesterday at The Road to Waterloo, a new permanent exhibition at the National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, London. The skeleton and the saw used to amputate the Earl of Uxbridge's leg are two of the more bizarre exhibits, which include a

large model of the Battle of Waterloo, covering 420 sq ft and including over 70,000 figures. The model, which has not been on show for 30 years, has been restored. The exhibition, The Road to Waterloo: the British Army and the Struggle against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, 1793-1815, is open every day (Sunday afternoons only), admission free.

Rising religious interest reflected by churches

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS REPORTER

THE surprising growth in the number of communicants in the Church of England reflects a trend that is being felt in Britain's other leading churches, according to figures published this week.

Details released earlier this week by the Church of England show the first official increase in church attendance since records began. Although neither Roman Catholics nor methodists can report an increase in members, the decline which has taken place at their

churches over the past 20 years has slowed.

The Catholic Education Council reported yesterday that about 1,350,000 people attended mass regularly in England and Wales last year. That compares with 1,380,000 in 1988 and 1,400,000 million in 1987, a decline from a peak of nearly 2,100,000 in 1962.

In the archdiocese of Southwark, the attendance at mass increased from 117,855 in 1988 to 119,744 last year although Westminster, Liverpool

and Hexham and Newcastle upon Tyne showed a decline. A similar pattern appears in the total Catholic population in England and Wales: 4,200,000 last year compared to 4,240,000 in 1988 and nearly 4,300,000 in 1979.

Father Philip Carroll, assistant general secretary of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, said: "There is no feeling of empty churches. The percentage of the Sunday mass congregation involved in other activities like

the Third World, justice and prayer is on the increase. I have noticed without any doubt an increase in interest in spiritual matters over the last ten years. A considerable interest in the transcendent has developed."

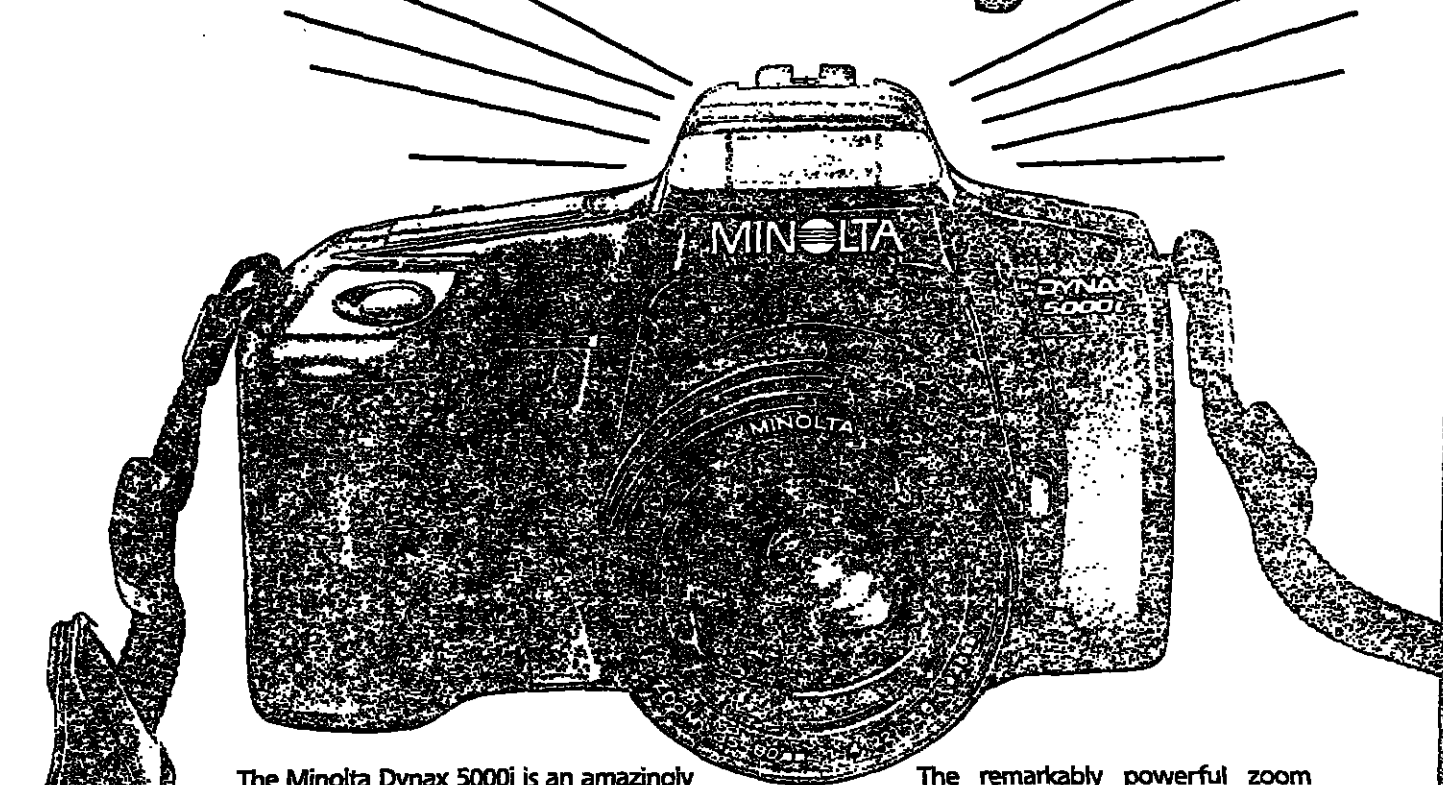
In the Methodist Church, the community roll has declined from 1,340,000 in 1986 to 1,320,000 last year. Church membership has fallen from 450,000 to 431,000. However, baptisms have increased each year for the past three years,

from 30,801 in 1986 to 30,864 last year. The Methodist Church has also reported an increase in lay workers and local preachers.

A spokeswoman said: "It is clear that the church is good at attracting people to the work. What is less clear is why we have not yet been able to halt the decline in membership, although there is a slight easing. The church has got some hard thinking to do."

Clifford Longley, page 10

Picture Christmas and New Year in a new light!



The Minolta Dynax 5000i is an amazingly compact autofocus SLR camera with so many built-in advanced features and to top it all, the world's first built-in zoom flash.

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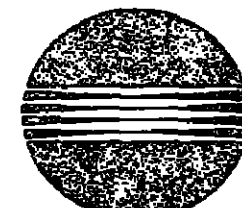
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MINOLTA

Right to save ancient Avebury from modern life

JULIAN HERBERT

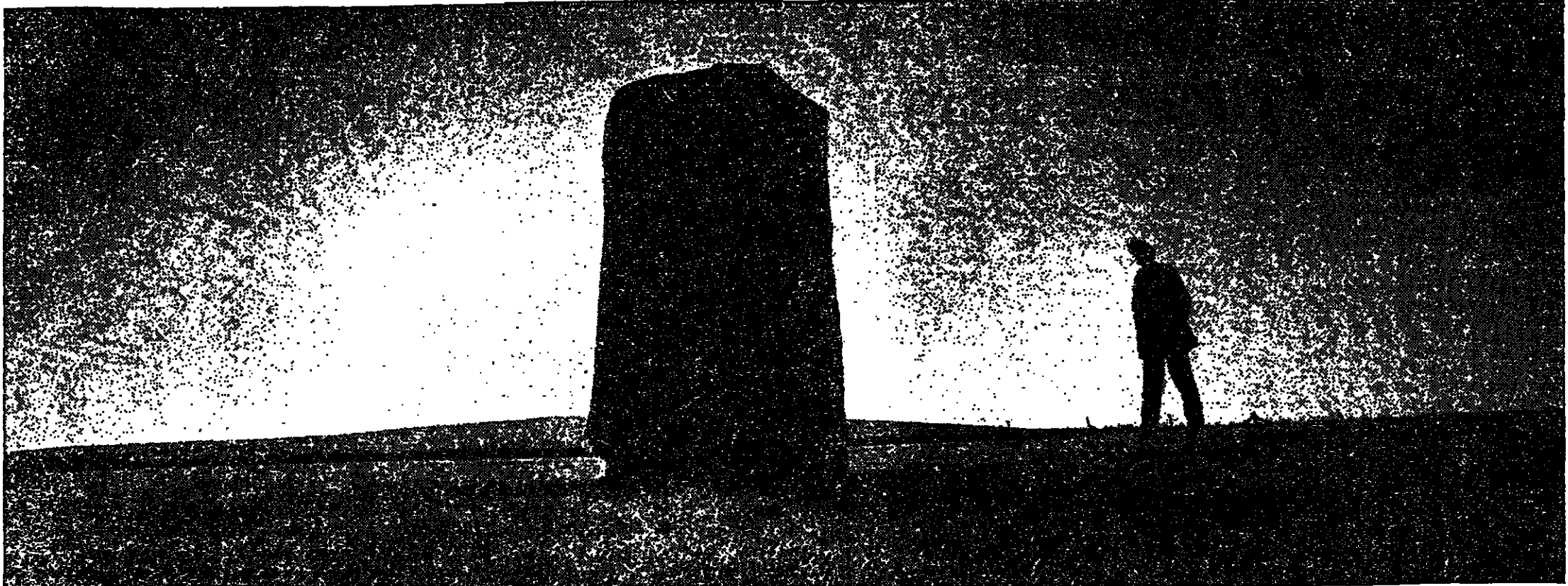
the ancient Avebury could show the way for other threatened sites, says John Young

ON A hill about a mile and half from Avebury, the Ridgeway, the ancient path across the Berkshire and Wiltshire Downs, comes to an abrupt halt at the A4. Immediately opposite, the famous avenue of neolithic stones leads to the great stone circles on the edge of the village.

A patch of newly grassed ground marks the site of a former transport cafe, demolished by the National Trust, which bought it earlier this year after the government rejected plans for a hotel and conference centre. That was round one to the conservationists who are seeking to prevent developers from moving in on one of the great ancient monuments of Europe.

Round two is being fought just down the road, where a grade two listed farmhouse stands empty, surrounded by derelict farm buildings and overgrown weeds. That too, is the site of a proposed hotel and conference centre, the subject of a public enquiry that ended 18 months ago. Although the property is now in receivership, the environment department has yet to announce a decision. The two-acre site was sold to the would-be developer for £985,000 and, with planning permission, could be worth up to £7 million.

Round three is taking place within the village itself, at the



Chris Giggell of the National Trust near one of Avebury's incomparable neolithic stones earlier this week. The trust has been buying land to safeguard their setting and is to return downland to pasture

Elizabethan Avebury Manor, where Ken King, a builder and developer from St Albans, has fallen foul of the planning laws. After buying the house in 1988, Mr King set about building an estate office, a courtyard of shops and workshops, a garden centre and other additions without seeking planning permission. Work was halted on the orders of Kennet

district council, whereupon Mr King applied for retrospective consent. That was refused and was the subject of another public enquiry, the outcome of which is awaited.

Since then Mr King has been prosecuted by the council for making unauthorised alterations to listed buildings. He was found guilty at Marlborough magistrates' court and fined £1,000 on each of a number of specimen charges.

The present ownership of the manor is not clear, but Mr King has moved to lodgings in the village. This week he was seen outside the house with a furniture van, when he saw a photographer and myself at the gate, in the company of Chris Giggell, the National Trust warden, he became abusive and threatening and, although we were on a public right of way, claimed that did not entitle us to loiter.

Despite its antiquity, the importance of Avebury, now a world heritage site, was scarcely recognised until Alexander Keiller bought the manor in the 1930s and began excavating and restoring the stones, most of which had been buried. Recent research by archaeologists from English Heritage and Southampton University, using scientific equipment, indicates that a large number of stones and other features have yet to be unearthed; their work is described in a book, *Avebury Revisited*.

Although almost all the land is owned by the National Trust, the maintenance of the principal monuments, including the stones, the long barrows and Silbury Hill, the largest prehistoric monument in Europe, is the responsibility of

Council bars sale of artefacts

By SARAH JANE CHECKLAND, ART MARKET CORRESPONDENT

GARDEN statuary from Avebury Manor narrowly escaped auction by Sotheby's, after intervention by Kennet council.

The items, which included a 19th-century marble figure of a classical muse listed in its own right and valued at £8,000, were transported for sale at Sotheby's Sussex on September 25. The vendor was Mrs Mitchell, who lives with Mr King.

"We served an enforcement notice, threatening High Court action," Mark Boden, the council's district secretary and solicitor, said. "In the event Mrs Mitchell withdrew the statue and three other items."

About 20 items were still sold, however, because of the impossibility of proving they had been in the garden since 1948, as the revised rules on listed buildings require. "When we removed the items from the house we were told the listing didn't apply to the statuary," Chris King, for Sotheby's, said. The auction house has been criticised recently

for attempting to sell many listed artefacts. After complaints by the Victorian Society, it withdrew five lots from a sale of arms and armour from Thoresby Hall in Nottinghamshire in the summer of last year, but refused to withdraw 268 further lots. The tomb of one of Queen Victoria's first cousins, from the church of St Charles Borromeo in Weybridge, Surrey, was withdrawn from auction after intervention by the society and English Heritage last January.

English Heritage. That is proving a somewhat uneasy partnership.

Meanwhile, the trust has been buying as much land as possible in the area to safeguard Avebury's incomparable setting. An appeal launched last year has all but reached its £750,000 target and allowed the purchase of a further 500 acres, bringing the total to 1,500 acres. The agricultural recession has worked in the trust's favour in that most farmers have been only too willing to sell. Much

of the land was bought as an investment at a time of soaring prices; growing arable crops on the light chalk soil requires heavy applications of fertiliser and is no longer profitable.

The trust intends to return all the downland to pasture, using no artificial fertilisers, and is confident that wild flowers and insects will quickly return to the meadows. Tenants will be allowed to grow crops in the valleys to provide a pattern of fields and

hedges, contrasting with the sweep of open downland.

If all goes well, Avebury could provide an example of how other parts of the English countryside might return to their traditional use and appearance. "I am quite happy as long as we can stay off unwelcome developments such as hotels, conference centres and golf courses," Mr Giggell says. "I accept there may be a need for them somewhere, but not in a place like this."



Ken King photographed last year in front of the listed Avebury Manor, which he bought in 1988. He has been convicted of making unauthorised alterations to it

Hillsborough police win inquest costs

By PETER DAVENPORT

SIX police officers involved in the Hillsborough disaster yesterday won the battle to have their legal representation paid for at the inquest into the tragedy.

South Yorkshire Police Authority had previously refused a request for legal costs from the men, a chief superintendent, three superintendents and two constables. However, at yesterday's meeting in Barnsley the authority reversed the decision.

It will mean that the officers, including the commander at the match, Chief Superintendent David Duckenfield, will not have to pay for lawyers at the inquest, which is expected to continue until March.

Sir Jack Layden, the authority chairman, said the decision had been reached because of new information presented to the meeting. The officers had been covered by insurance policies for legal representation and once those funds were exhausted the

authority would give the required financial assistance.

Richard Wells, chief constable of South Yorkshire, said after the private meeting: "I am pleased and relieved at this decision. It will now mean that these officers are not disadvantaged in the level of legal representation they can have."

Mr Wells warned, however, that government spending limits could "seriously curtail" the ability of his force to deal with major incidents, disorder and serious crime.

In a report to the authority he said that the financial measures would also "markedly reduce" the effectiveness of day-to-day policing. Under government limits for 1991-2, the force can spend £54.6 million before facing capping. A spokeswoman for the authority said yesterday that that would leave a shortfall of £4.5 million if the force were simply to maintain existing services. Mr Wells out-

lined the impact of cuts on the force and the service it could deliver if it had to keep within the limits.

If there was a freeze on recruitment the current strength of the force would fall from 2,998 to 2,878 - 297 less than the last establishment review recommended and a figure that gives the authority the worst officer/population ratio of all metropolitan forces.

The force would also have to replace lost civilian personnel in important areas with police officers, causing a further reduction of 220 staff. The operational effect of losing so many staff from normal duty by March 1992 would mean a reduction of 30 officers per division. Increasing demands on officers would also exacerbate the effects of the cuts. In the first six months of this financial year South Yorkshire dealt with 5,000 more reported crimes and 16,000 more incidents than in the same period last year.

One way to limit the effects of cuts, Mr Wells said, would be to take money from force reserves, which currently stand at about £2.4 million. That would, however, mean the force would be less able to meet the cost of unforeseen incidents, such as a disaster at next year's World Student Games in Sheffield.

Members of the authority are to lobby local MPs and seek a meeting with Home Office ministers in an attempt to secure extra resources before setting the budget for the next financial year.

Government rules 'could end Channel swimming'

By NICHOLAS WATT

THE sport of Channel swimming could end because the government is imposing expensive regulations on the small craft that act as escort boats, the Channel Swimming Association (CSA) says.

The transport department has warned Channel pilots that they must bring their commercially hired boats up to higher standards by complying with existing regulations on low-line certification and master licences.

Mike Oram, a pilot, said it could cost up to £5,000 a boat to comply with the rules. He has had to cancel all his bookings from around the world for next summer. Those included a group of former transplant patients who were aiming to raise £1 million for charity.

He said the transport department was imposing standards for 200-tonne boats on small vessels that were normally accepted as pleasure craft.

The CSA is asking Robert Atkins, the sports minister, to intervene. Ray Scott, chairman of the CSA, said the sport had been going for 116 years and there had never been any complaints about the safety of the boats or the ability of pilots and crews.

However, a transport department spokesman said there had been a near miss this year between a swimmer and a ship because the escort boat did not have a load-line limit. The channel was the busiest shipping route in the world. Swimming it was a bit like walking across the M1.

Producer of Cliff Richard musical awarded £400,000

By SIMON TAIT, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE theatre producer and former pop singer Dave Clark won £400,000 damages yesterday against Rank Theatres, which was found to have run an inefficient box office for his musical *Time*. "I feel glad all over," he said outside the High Court, quoting his most successful song of the 1960s.

The dispute between Rank and Mr Clark's *The Right Time* Company, however, appeared to be far from over last night. Rank may appeal against yesterday's award and there are two outstanding cases still to be heard: a claim for the restitution of a deposit lodged by Mr Clark with Rank, and an action for slander and breach of confidence.

Rank Theatres would not comment on the forthcoming court



Dave Clark after his High Court victory yesterday

hearings, but the company is expected to defend the first on the basis of its claim that the theatre was not returned to its original state after the show's run, a standard requirement in theatre contracts.

Time, starring Cliff Richard and a hologram of Lord Olivier, ran at the Dominion Theatre in Tottenham Court Road for two years until 1988. Although it grossed £15 million and was seen by a million people, it was a financial failure.

Many of the features created for the show remain in the theatre. The auditorium is still painted black, it has a drop ceiling, and the walls bear traces of scenery. A chandelier that was dismantled for the production was never replaced, although the stage was cleared of scenery.

Mr Clark said that ticket sales were lost because of the inefficiency of the theatre box office. Mr Justice Millett ruled yesterday that the box office had been seriously undermanned and Rank was in breach of its contractual obligation to run the box office efficiently. Mr Clark hailed the judgment as a victory for "the small people in the industry, the new producers" and described the case, which he began in June 1987, as a "David and Goliath" battle.

Rank, however, said: "That he only got 3 per cent of his original claim of £15 million is not a significant victory, but this will send a shiver through West End management in case every time a show flops the producers seek to blame the management."

The Society of West End Theatre, which represents the management of 49 theatres, but of which Rank is not a member, said that there would be repercussions. Rupert Rhymer, chief executive, said: "Both producers and management will have to look very carefully at their contractual obligations after this judgment."

The Dominion is in the hands of the receiver, with a number of bids from theatre management groups, said to range from £5 million to £8 million, being considered. The theatre was to have been demolished by a development consortium that bought it from Rank to create a hotel and offices, but part of the consortium went into liquidation.

The Dominion is now managed by Apollo Leisure, which has made a bid for it. Paul Gregg, its managing director, said: "It is a standard obligation that a theatre should be returned to the condition in which the producers found it. Sticking to this sort of condition is vital to the efficiency of the West End circuit."

MP warns of danger from toys

Nigel Griffiths, shadow consumer minister, yesterday called on the government to protect children from dangerous toys being sold for Christmas after claiming that about 47,000 children are injured each year from them.

At a press conference at Westminster, where he demonstrated a number of defective toys, Mr Griffiths said that parents should be persuaded to buy toys from reputable outlets.

"Action is needed to tackle those unscrupulous manufacturers who seek to avoid prosecution by putting a suggested minimum age on a product that is clearly intended for younger children," he said.

Operation award
Jean Howell, aged 35, of Armley, Leeds, who claimed a mistake in giving an anaesthetic left her awake during a caesarean operation at Leeds general hospital, was awarded £47,500 damages yesterday after Leeds Western health authority admitted liability.

Anti-hunt action
Sixteen anti-hunt saboteurs and Jason Fazzackerley, a Green party prospective parliamentary candidate for Portsmouth North, have started legal action against Sussex police after charges against them were dropped last month for threatening behaviour at a fox hunt in Petworth, West Sussex.

Factory egg fine
Lincoln magistrates yesterday fined Daylark Foods, of Bilsthorpe, Nottinghamshire, £3,000 plus £5,000 costs after battery hen eggs were labelled as free range at its North Scarle plant near Lincoln.

Welsh contestant
Rod Richards, former Welsh language broadcaster, will contest Clwyd North West for the Tories at the next general election.

Nun assaulted
Police hunting two men who kicked and sexually assaulted an Anglican nun, aged 46, in Lime Street, Liverpool, yesterday, have criticised passers-by who ignored her calls for help.

Last post dates
Tuesday is the last posting date for airmail to Albania, the Azores, the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands, Cape Verde, Corsica, Gibraltar, Madeira, Malta, The Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Spain and the Soviet Union.

Theatre move
Sir John Tooley, former general director of the Royal Opera House, has been appointed chairman of the Almeida Theatre Company, London.

Monitors of disarmament prepare their checklists

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire has been famous for the presence of the Red Arrows aerobatic team. The red Hawks now have a rival in Jag, the joint arms control implementation group, which although not as glamorous is about to play an important role in East-West relations.

Inside the drab buildings at Scampton, 96 men from the three armed services are preparing to spend cold winters in Kiev, Leningrad and Moscow, examining tanks with tape measures, peering into military hangars and recording the destruction of thousands of Soviet weapon systems.

Jag, formally set up earlier this year, is Britain's contribution to the verification system agreed by the 22 countries of Nato and the Warsaw Pact which signed the Conventional Forces in Europe

(CFE) treaty in Paris last month. Jag is both an inspection and escort agency, monitoring Warsaw Pact treaty limited equipment and taking Soviet, Bulgarian and other pact representatives around Britain's military sites.

Under the CFE inspection protocol details are arranged down to the equipment approved for checking that no one is cheating. In addition to the usual armory of cameras, binoculars, tape recorders and tape measures, the CFE inspectors will be allowed to carry laptop computers to record their observations. "Mind you, I don't suppose we will be using laptops in the Soviet Union when it's freezing," Colonel Roy Giles, Jag's commander, said. "We will probably stick to notebooks and pencils."

In a demonstration of Jag's staff skills, Colonel Giles showed

off military personnel, supposedly from a country called Lincolnia, dressed in flying suits and combat jackets and pretending to be East European inspectors checking on Tornados and Saxon armoured vehicles at the base.

The 96 Russian-speaking inspectors at Jag are supported by 28 personnel. When the CFE treaty is ratified by the 22 countries, probably in May, the inspectors from Scampton will form teams of nine and be ready to start their work. "They have all undergone recognition courses, so that they know the difference between the T72 tank and a T55," Colonel Giles said.

The commandant, aged 52, a Russian speaker for 30 years, admitted there was potential confusion over what he called simultaneity. For, once the CFE treaty is in force, Jag will have

to cope with inspection and escort teams arriving from three separate East/West agreements. "Theoretically, they could all fall on the same day," Colonel Giles said.

Apart from CFE, there is the Stockholm agreement, enforced from January 1987, which allows foreign inspectors into Britain to observe military training exercises, and the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, involving Soviet checks on the two cruise missile bases at Greenham Common, Berkshire, and Molesworth, Cambridgeshire.

Although the INF treaty was signed only by the United States and the Soviet Union, Britain has to supply Russian interpreters and escorts to monitor Soviet visits to this country. "There is no link between these agreements," Colonel Giles said. "So you could

have Soviet inspectors arriving to do INF checks at the same time as others are visiting under Stockholm or CFE."

Jag's teams went recently to France to carry out a practice inspection of two French bases. Another team, wearing a Stockholm hat, went to Minsk in the Soviet Union to observe a military exercise. A few days later a Soviet inspection team, led by one Colonel Trofimov, turned up at Balford, Dorset, to watch tank training, also under the Stockholm agreement.

The CFE rules over the region from the Atlantic to the Urals, which means that any British base in the treaty-limited area is subject to inspection.

That includes the sovereign bases at Cyprus, the military facilities in Gibraltar, without which neither is a signatory to the CFE treaty.

Paper shows how mafia shares out Moscow fiefdoms

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN MOSCOW

IN A highly unusual piece of journalism, which quoted police and criminal sources, *Kommersant*, a business weekly, this week revealed how the Moscow mafia has carved up the Soviet capital into underworld fiefdoms.

Kommersant, which has established, over the past year, a reputation as a hard-hitting and tough-minded reporter of Moscow's seamy side, has even dared to publish a map of Moscow criminal territories. This is a picture of Soviet life in the 1990s.

Suppose you are an able-bodied young Muscovite in search of a challenging job and not averse to physical danger. You could join the police and do your bit for the "tough and unyielding struggle to uphold the law" proclaimed this week by Boris Yeltsin, the new interior minister who has been hailed by conservatives as a hardliner. For this you will be paid around 250 roubles a month, or £25 sterling at the official exchange rate for tourists, with little compensation for your family if you are killed.

Alternatively, you could earn a basic 7,000 roubles a month as a member of Moscow's bigger mafia clans, with a bonus every time there is a fight and the prospect of eventually being head of a small protection squad on 40,000 roubles a month.

The Russians employ the word mafia rather loosely; opponents of the Communist Party use it rhetorically to describe a political elite which is self-serving and nepotistic, and may also be downright criminal.

Another sort of mafia is widely blamed for the massive and increasing diversion of food from the state distribution system, which has

brought such misery to sick and elderly Muscovites who cannot pay black-market prices.

And mafia is probably an appropriate word for a system in which lorries mysteriously load up at the huge state food depots on the outskirts of Moscow and sell their ill-gotten produce to anyone who is prepared to pay serious money.

Every Muscovite will tell you the drivers collude with store directors to cook the books and show that the food was in fact delivered to state shops. If any food does get as far as those state shops, the director and all his assistants

One group does so well out of the protection rackets, it has ample to reinvest in 'legal' business

make sure it never reaches the counter. The real mafia no doubt play its part.

But if the *Kommersant* report is correct, the hard-core mafia's most lucrative activity is not diverting food from the state as such, but protecting those who are widely accused by the public of doing so — mainly the owners of Moscow's "co-operative" or private restaurants and other businesses.

One clan, the Dolgoprudensky group, is said to be doing so well out of the protection business that it has ample funds to reinvest in "almost legal" sectors like motor repairs and the construction of weekend cottages.

If the Moscow rumour mill

is to be believed, the most fearsome mafiosi in the city are the Chechens, one of dozens of fierce races from the mountain valleys of the northern Caucasus.

Wrong, says *Kommersant*. The power of the Chechens appears to have waned since they were foolish enough not to attend a kind of mafia summit near the Black Sea in 1988. At this meeting, Moscow was carved up into spheres of influence by the Dolgoprudensky and its rivals in the Lyubersky group, which has since been partly broken up by police.

Kommersant explains that the arrogant Chechens, who threatened to take Moscow over and thus united all the other groups against them, should not be confused with the Ingush, who spring from a neighbouring Caucasus valley and trade with the Italians in fur and leather.

Another southern race, the Assyrians, are said to be in firm control of the drug trade; while Moscow's Riga or Rizhsky market, an apparently free-wheeling bazaar for goods of every kind, is divided between the Lyubersky group and the Chechens.

A new clan, the Solntsevo group, is said to enjoy influence over the used-car market at Yuzhny Port and a substantial income from one-armed bandits.

Mrs Lyudmila Ivanova, a policewoman and Moscow city councillor, who has relentlessly denounced the mafia and suffered attacks on her family which she says are too horrible to describe, confirms that the division of the city into spheres of influence is familiar to everyone in the security forces.

"I know about it perfectly well. The division is necessary in a big city, because otherwise they would kill each other," she said when asked about the *Kommersant* map.

According to the paper, "trespassers" are sometimes shot, and sometimes "fined"; an all-out shooting war was narrowly averted last month.

Mrs Ivanova worries that if Moscow's system of denying residents' permits to most outsiders — a move that most of her fellow liberals favour — the city will be deluged by drug dealers from the Black Sea and central Asia who will snap up desirable pieces of newly privatised real estate.

If the shops are to be sold off, she says, then they should not be disposed of at knock-down prices to their employees, as some reformers have suggested. They should be auctioned to fetch the highest possible amount to bolster the city's coffers and help fund welfare schemes.

After all, Mrs Ivanova is quick to point out, "our Moscow mafia will buy them at any price."

Saturday Review, page 10



End of the reel: David Woods, the GATT spokesman in Brussels, surrounded by journalists and cassette recorders yesterday as he announces the indefinite suspension of the conference because of deadlock over EC farm subsidies

Four-year road to GATT failure

FROM MICHAEL BINYON AND PETER GUILFORD, BRUSSELS

BRINKSMANSHIP, unrealistic expectations, political miscalculation and a failure by the world's leaders early on to realise what was at stake are all to blame for yesterday's collapse of the world trade negotiations in Brussels.

Both the Americans and the Europeans underestimated the others' tenacity and stubborn unwillingness to go against the grain of political opinion at home. The European Community was hampered by an inflexible negotiating process that entrusted responsibility to the commission, sheltering European leaders from the direct and personal consequences of

failure. The United States misunderstood how far the EC has come together as a single unit, and by trying to destroy the basis of the common agricultural policy, only succeeded in rallying EC leaders behind it.

The seeds of misunderstanding were planted in Punta del Este, the Uruguayan resort where four years ago the members of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade launched an ambitious scheme to usher in a new era of trade-based world prosperity. By setting new rules for the opening markets and drawing into their orbit for the first time vital areas of the world

economy such as agriculture, finance, transport, telecommunications, textiles and copyright, they hoped to link all together in a huge bargaining session so that concessions in one area could be balanced by trade-offs in another.

Almost from the start, arguments began over agriculture. The main aim of the US was to abolish all export subsidies, which undercut the ability of Americans to sell their cheaply produced farm output abroad. The Europeans insisted they would never contemplate an end of all subsidies, as this would destroy the fabric of the CAP at enormous expense to Europe's

struggling farmers. Halfway through the Uruguay Round, as the talks are known, America bludgeoned the community at Montreal into agreeing to "substantial and progressive" cuts in farm subsidies. However, no one spelt out exactly what this meant, and so the basis for misunderstanding was laid.

And by linking agriculture, vital to so many third world nations, to the numbing complexities of investment rules, intellectual property and other issues concerning mainly the industrialised nations, the negotiators held all progress hostage to the gut political issue of farming.

GATT also was prisoner of its own labyrinthine and lacklustre complexity. The world's leaders neither understood nor cared what was at stake. Nor did public opinion. Vital political decisions were repeatedly postponed, or glossed over. At the Houston economic summit in July, for example, it was already clear that farm negotiations were in deep trouble. But the world focused instead on the more tangible issue of aid to the Soviet Union.

Only Mrs Thatcher insisted on sounding the alarm bells to her partners in the European Community. They would not listen. At the Rome summit in October, the Italian hosts were determined to make a dash for monetary union, and brushed aside her call for urgent action on the EC's stalled farm offer.

Migration pact eludes EC

FROM PAUL BOMPARD IN ROME

EUROPE'S interior ministers, meeting in Rome yesterday, expressed alarm about the growing pressure of immigration into EC countries. However, they failed to reach firm agreement on how this influx from Eastern Europe and the Third World should be controlled at Europe's external frontiers and the borders between EC nations after 1992.

"Europe is becoming an economic magnet," said Kenneth Baker, the home secretary. "There is growing concern over the migratory pressure which is fast building up all around Europe. Migration on this scale has never

been experienced in recent European history."

The EC ministers, and observers from non-EC countries, were in Rome for one of the "Trevi group" series of meetings. The main themes of discussion were co-operation in fighting terrorism, the recycling of profits from crime, and the search for a common EC policy on immigration.

The latter dominated yesterday's talks. The crucial point was whether the principle of free movement within the community should apply only to EC nationals or also to citizens of other countries. Most

ministers were in favour of a completely open policy. The British position was more cautious. Mr Baker said Britain was in favour of maintaining immigration controls for non-EC citizens entering Britain from Europe.

Vincenzo Scotti, the Italian interior minister and president of the meeting, said it would not be possible to sign a European convention on immigration this year.

Turning to crime and terrorism, the ministers agreed to keep working towards creating a European intelligence unit while increasing co-operation between police forces.

Refugee status for boat people

Hong Kong — A group of 111 Vietnamese boat people, who claimed they had been detained illegally, won refugee status here. The colony's government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees announced that they had been declared eligible for resettlement (Paul Mooney writes).

The decision came as a surprise, since the government had argued that the people, fleeing communist rule in their country, had no right to land in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong authorities had hinted that they would probably be sent back to Vietnam.

The Vietnamese, who had been detained for 18 months, attracted international attention last month when they were rearrested hours after a High Court judge had set them free on the ground that they had been detained illegally.

Rahman buried

Kuala Lumpur — Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first prime minister of Malaysia, who died on Thursday night aged 87, was buried with the honours of a ruler at the royal burial ground in his home state of Kedah.

Caretaker ruler

Sofia — President Zhelev of Bulgaria appointed Dimitar Popov, a lawyer aged 63, with no party affiliation, to head a caretaker government until new elections can be held. The Socialist government resigned last week in the face of strikes and street protests. (Reuters)

'Radioactive' sea

Wellington — Greenpeace, the environmental group, said it had found traces of radioactive caesium and cobalt 12 miles from the French nuclear test site on Mururoa atoll in the south Pacific, so contesting claims by France that its underground weapons programme is safe. (Reuters)

Burnt to death

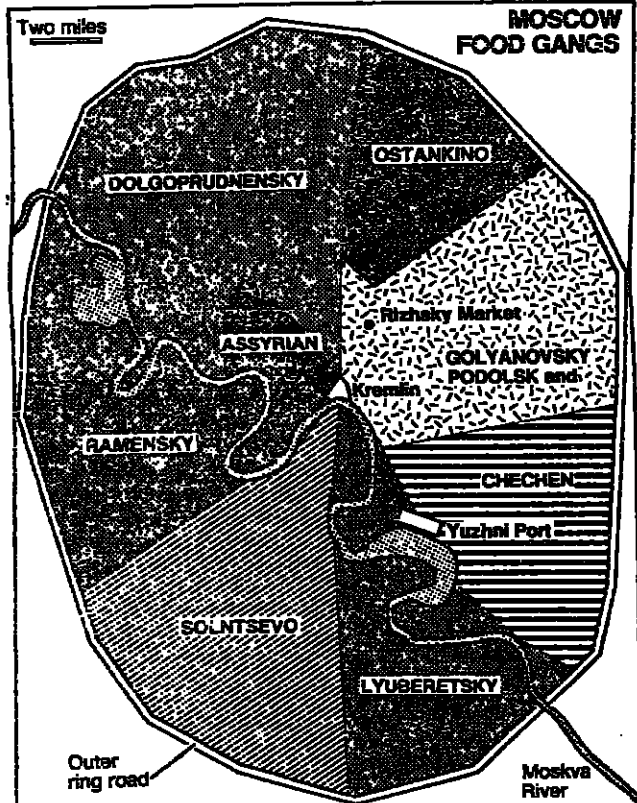
Ayodhya — Hindu militants claimed that an Indian who was burnt to death here killed himself in protest over a disputed shrine but others said that was a Muslim victim of Hindu violence. (Reuters)

Aid for Liberia

Geneva — An aircraft chartered by the United Nations left Switzerland with 20 tonnes of food and medicine for Liberia, where aid workers said that hungry orphans were wandering through the ruins left by civil war. (Reuters)

Piggyback ride

Sydney — The Soviet space shuttle, Buran, will make its first trip abroad next year on the back of the world's largest aircraft, the Antonov 225, in a visit to Australia and New Zealand. Other space equipment will also be displayed during the four-week goodwill trip. (Reuters)



ANC may loosen sanctions

FROM GAVIN BELL IN JOHANNESBURG

THE African National Congress, while publicly insisting that sanctions should be maintained against South Africa, is discreetly considering proposals for gradually easing the boycotts next year.

A confidential ANC discussion document, calling for a comprehensive policy review, recommends that trade, sports and cultural embargoes should be relaxed, and tied only to racial discrimination in specific companies and organizations. It suggests that the lifting of oil, arms, and financial sanctions should be linked to the establishment of an interim government.

The proposals are believed to have been drafted by Thabo Mbeki, the organization's foreign affairs chief, and moderate in his department who are attending the United Nations debate on the issue in New York. ANC sources say that the report has been endorsed by senior officials, and will be submitted for adoption at a national consultative conference in Johannesburg next week.

With a majority of European countries believing that the time has come to lift sanctions, the document concedes that the effect of diplomatic and trade restrictions has been reduced. It argues that sanctions could be eased because adverse reaction to any regression in government reforms would ensure their reimposition. Nelson Mandela, the ANC deputy president, signalled the impending shift in a letter to policy shift in the days leading up to the European summit in Rome.

Tyminski loses 'secrets' gambit

FROM ROGER BOYES IN WARSAW

STANISLAW Tyminski had a few hours left before the end of the presidential election campaign. What to do? He decided to hold a press conference. He arrived 90 minutes late, but the wait would be worth it, said his staff.

"Stan will blow Walesa out of the water with his documents," said a man with a slim moustache. He seemed vaguely familiar from the days of martial law. The émigré businessman had run out of words. The election is on Sunday. The closer one comes to the ballot box, the lighter the words seem to weigh.

But the candidate had his black briefcase which, he has hinted for a fortnight or more, contains the full, compromising truth about the front-runner for the presidency, Lech Walesa. It would have to

be a revelation of almost biblical proportions to bridge the gap — Mr Walesa 73 per cent, Mr Tyminski 16 per cent, according to the last poll — but Mr Tyminski's staff (who sometimes forget themselves and address each other as "captain") have experience in digging up glibby material.

The candidate ignored the pleas of the pack. For "ethical reasons," said Mr Tyminski, the briefcase had to stay closed. "Liar," shouted a reporter. It was very hot in the candidate's campaign headquarters, a small room in the Palace of Culture.

"Show us," yelled another. "Open the case." An American journalist grabbed the briefcase, a combination-lock metal and plastic club-class item.

"Let go, you thief!" said the

candidate, tugging for his secrets. At last, Mr Tyminski gave ground. "All right, I'll show you a compromising document." He extracted a magazine. "This is last week's *Newsweek*." There was a groan.

"Walesa has an interview here. It is a deeply damaging document. Walesa says he wants a coup in Poland. He expresses the intentions of a terrorist and assassin." More groans.

The Solidarity leader in fact said that if Mr Tyminski won the election there would be social unrest in Poland and that he would end up fleeing the country. The magazine, on sale throughout the capital, was not exactly the explosive dossier promised at every rally and conference. From that

monument, Mr Tyminski's campaign collapsed. He travelled to Szczecin for a last rally, an hour before the deadline for campaigning, but nobody noticed. The candidate did not bring his briefcase.

Mr Walesa stayed at home in Gdansk. He is trying to put together a government. On December 13 — the anniversary of the declaration of martial law nine years ago — the Polish parliament will meet and will probably accept the resignation of the prime minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and his government. If all goes according to the opinion polls, President Walesa will then suggest a new line-up.

As for Mazowiecki supporters, commanding 18 per cent or more of the vote, the weekend will be full of the kind of anguish secretly loved by Polish intellectuals. Should they now vote for Mr Walesa out of solidarity with Solidarity, even though the electrician from Gdansk destroyed their government? Or should they boycott the election and thus indirectly help Mr Tyminski, since a low turnout hurts Mr Walesa most?

Even the pro-government *Gazeta Wyborcza* could not make up its mind yesterday. A front-page editorial concludes: "The basic calculation shows that Walesa is better than Tyminski and therefore it is better to support him, unless somebody, deep down in his conscience, is unable to do that. I'm not persuading anyone to violate his conscience."

Another article inside the newspaper, however, argues that as Mr Walesa was sure to win, it would be better for Poland if he won narrowly, reigning in his autocratic instincts.

New face of the master spy

FROM ANNE McELVOY IN BERLIN

THROUGHOUT his 30 years at the head of East Germany's espionage service, Markus Wolf was known as the Man Without a Face. He evaded the West German secret service by operating from deep inside the ministry of state security and rarely travelled abroad except to Moscow. The first snatched picture of him in the 1970s earned its photographer a fortune.

Now his face is everywhere as from exile, he wages a publicity campaign for his latest book, with the unlikely title *Markus Wolf: I'm no Spy*. Nobody knows quite where he is hiding in Eastern Europe. Herr Wolf has never been so conspicuous as in his absence, a result of Bonn refusing to grant him amnesty in the days leading up to unity. A warrant

for his arrest for "treason in the most serious instance" still stands. The news magazines *Stern* and *Der Spiegel* fought for his memoirs. One woman's magazine has even printed his favourite recipes for Russian food.

He was advised to leave Germany by his lawyer, Friedrich Wolf, who is also defending Erich Honecker, the former East German leader, on the grounds that he could not be assured of a fair trial while feelings against the Stasi, the secret police, were high.

This week, however, he has pleaded to be allowed to go home. He has sent his message through channels ranging from *Pravda* to letters to President von Weizsäcker of Germany and Hans-Dietrich

Genscher, the German foreign minister. His boasts that he would "put all the cards on the table" if hauled before a Western court and then disappear to "a wooden hut in Siberia" have been replaced by a conciliatory tone towards the federal authorities he once sought to undermine.

"I would like to live in Germany," he told *Pravda*. "Now, with the signing of the Charter of Paris and the end of this period in European history, my activities and those of my intelligence colleagues should not be subject to the criminal code of Germany."

Herr Wolf, who was responsible for the infiltration of Willy Brandt's chancellery office, told *Pravda* he no longer intended to settle in the Soviet Union.

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Democrats fear Bush will steal Gulf glory

FROM PETER STOTHARD, US EDITOR, WASHINGTON

ACCORDING to President Saddam Hussein, the Democratic majority in Congress can take one-third of the credit for the promised release of the foreign hostages in Iraq. But for some Democrats, to be lumped alongside the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Yemen and the faceless men of the European parliament is a mixed blessing.

Richard Solarz, the influential New York representative, told a party meeting after the announcement that if the party denies support for a presidential policy which successfully defeats President Saddam, the electorate will keep it out of the White House "forever". He won some considerable, if subdued, support for this view among colleagues who feel that they have buried the memory of President Carter and do not wish the ghost of "peace-without-strength" to return.

Representative Vic Fazio of California, the new chairman of the Democratic campaign committee, said that if Iraq left Kuwait as a result of US actions, the Democrats may be seen yet again as the party which lacked the spine to support American leadership with military might.

Many Democrats are nervous about the influence of Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, the party's senior military figure, who has broken with his characteristic caution to lead the argument on Capitol Hill against the acceleration in President Bush's military build-up. Senator Nunn, himself, is well-placed, they say. His constitutional responsibility as chairman of the armed services committee and his own strong record of supporting the US military through the Cold War gives him personal protection against the "peace-without-strength" charge. The party as a whole is

more vulnerable and, although Senator Nunn is said to be planning a run for the White House, he is only one of many potential candidates for whom the Gulf conflict will be a critical factor.

When Democratic legislators gather for the 102nd Congress next month, they will be able to mount the third-largest opposition to a sitting president in the history of the United States. The Washington newspapers are full of stories about Republican division and decline. Republicans in the House of Representatives are deeply at odds with the White House over the future direction of domestic policy.

Their lack of numbers rules out any hope of the type of coalition with right-wing Democrats which gave them hope and power in the early Reagan days. Nor are right-wing Democrats converting into Republicans any more.

The Democrats have their opponents on the congressional ropes. But the party still sees the greater prize as ousting President Bush. Its leaders, therefore, want to watch a little longer before deciding which is the winning way around the Gulf. For the coming weeks they wish to wound but not strike.

Robert Dole of Kansas, the Senate Republican leader, makes almost daily taunts that Congress should make its position clear, this week calling President Saddam's action in freeing the hostages a vindication of the president's courageous policy.

The call for Congress to be recalled was made also by Richard Lugar of Indiana, a senior Republican senator. But among Democrats the most senior advocate for a recall is Senator Edward Kennedy, whose hopes for higher office lie wholly in the past.



Together again: Donita Cole, of Odessa, Texas, reunited with her husband John in Baghdad. Mrs Cole travelled with a group of Americans to Iraq in the hope of securing the release of their relatives

No desert Shields but still Hope

FROM SUSAN ELLICOTT IN WASHINGTON

ONLY a couple of months ago, the flagging spirits of US troops in the Gulf were lifted by the prospect of a Christmas visit from Brooke Shields. No more. Saudi Arabia, which requires its women to appear in public covered from head to toe, has surprised the organizers of the American actress's proposed tour by asking them to withdraw her visa application.

A spokeswoman for the USO, a charity which puts together shows for American forces abroad, said that Ms Shields's visit has been postponed and "we really don't

understand why". Those familiar with the former model's career suspect it may have something to do with her sexy image. As a child, she launched her career amid controversy with the lead role in *Pretty Baby*, a film about a child prostitute. Later, she posed semi-naked (but with her back to the camera) in an advertisement for Calvin Klein jeans with the slogan: "Nothing comes between me and my Calvin's."

These days, the Princeton graduate still makes headlines in gossip magazines for her

friendship with Michael Jackson and a reported romance with a Washington lawyer. In her teens, Ms Shields's exercise-conscious, outdoors looks graced countless fashion magazine covers, leading at least one beauty editor to comment that she had the most perfect eyebrows in the business.

The embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington had no immediate comment yesterday. Organisers had suspected problems with the visa application but were baffled at the Saudi request since Ms Shields, like other visitors to the Gulf in past weeks, was expected to dress in official Army fatigues, a hat and sunglasses for her appearance before the troops.

News of the Saudi government's opposition to the actress's tour is likely to fuel growing resentment among the US public about why young American lives should be at risk in order to protect a country that does not share the US values of freedom and democracy.

Those deployed in Operation Desert Shield are denied

alcohol and female troops are required to cover their arms when working. The kingdom, which contains the holiest cities of Islam, has also infuriated homelick forces by outlawing the reading of Bibles in public and forbidding US armed services chaplains from displaying crosses on their uniforms.

In a token conciliatory gesture, Saudi authorities have reversed a ban on Christmas cards, but only if they do not contain pictures of the Nativity, the Virgin Mary or Jesus Christ. Carol services are also banned, forcing troops to call euphemistic "community meetings". A ban on Christmas trees and holly has been lifted.

Ms Shields is not the only entertainer to fall foul of Saudi customs. In late summer, the authorities cancelled a show produced for US troops after the legs of dancing expatriate women appeared on television. The homelick troops, many of whom are spending their first Christmas away from their families, will have to be content with an appearance by Bob Hope, who is 87.

UK fugitives await all-clear from embassy

By RAY CLANCY

HUNDREDS of British hostages hiding in Kuwait are unlikely to come out until they receive confirmation from embassy officials that they can return home, some of their wives predicted yesterday.

As the families of hostages continued to celebrate the possible homecoming of their loved ones in time for Christmas, one wife revealed the frightening conditions that the men in Kuwait are still facing. Lesley Bell of Petersfield, Hampshire, has had smuggled letters from her husband, Chris, in which he described how he had to crawl inside a heating duct when armed Iraqi soldiers searched the apartment where he was hiding.

"This is all much worse for the families of those men who are in hiding. We have not received any telephone calls. The men are prisoners, relying on outside help from resistance workers for food and constantly in fear of being discovered," she said as her two daughters excitedly drew pictures of a plane arriving at Heathrow with their father coming down the steps.

The girls, Victoria, aged eight, and Gemma, aged five, wrote to Santa Claus asking for their father and the family cats - left behind in Kuwait - for Christmas presents. "Daddy is coming home. I want to write a book about all this, all I can remember about Kuwait," said Victoria.

But Mrs Bell, aged 37, who worked as a sales supervisor for a freight company in Kuwait, talks with an edge of caution. Several times her husband, a computer sales executive whom she left in Kuwait on September 3, has hidden in fear of his life when soldiers searched all the apartments where foreigners used to stay. In his last letter, dated November 18, he described how he did not have time to reach the usual heating duct and barricaded himself in a room.

Of the raids he wrote: "On the 13th (November) the building was raided by seven plainclothes security police, all armed with AK47s and looking as if they meant business. We didn't have time to make it to the roof so we hid in one of the maid's abandoned rooms for three hours." Mr Bell said he had been almost ill with fear when they tried the door of the room but he and his companion had managed to prop it shut.

Mrs Bell predicted that it could take many weeks for all the hostages to be freed. "When we came out we had to travel to Baghdad, wait for visas and wait again to go to the airport. I would appeal to the Iraqis to do away with the

red tape and just let these people out."

Another woman, whose husband is in hiding, agreed that they would be reluctant to go out on to the streets until they felt safe. "These men are in a terrible state. My husband and many others have been going without sufficient food; they have been living like scared animals," said Elaine of Chatham, Kent, who did not want to give her full name because she feared repercussions against her husband.

Relatives who gathered at the offices of the Gulf Support Group in Kingsway, central London, heard that the Iraqi parliament had confirmed the hostages were to be freed when the news came over on the agency printer. "We're delighted. Getting confirmation has made all the difference. It makes everything that has been worked for, not just by us but by everyone else over the past four months, all worthwhile," said Joanna Copley, a founder of the group.

Sue Dorrington, whose husband David is being held in Baghdad, said she had a romantic telephone call from him on Thursday, not long after he had heard the news. "He told me that he loved me and said he wanted to be home in time for our son, Ian's, tenth birthday next Tuesday."

Activists to set up peace camp

Baghdad - Iraq has authorised Western peace activists to set up an "international peace camp" on its border with Saudi Arabia to prevent war. About 100 volunteers would come to Iraq to join the camp on December 17 and would join later, the "Gulf peace team", a seven-member advance party, said in a statement.

A team member, Pat Arrowsmith of Britain, said that Iraqi officials had told them they would be allowed to visit the border area in two or three days to find and prepare a site. The team has also applied to Saudi authorities for permission to set up a camp on the border in Saudi Arabia. (Reuters)

Easy win

Cairo - With all but a handful of results officially declared, the ruling National Democratic Party in Egypt is certain of an overwhelming majority in the country's next parliament. Results so far showed the party had won 348 of 454 seats. (Reuters)

More troops

Cairo - Egypt is sending 7,000 more troops to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates this month, bringing the total to almost 30,000 men. Defence ministry sources said the men would be drawn from the armoured corps. In an interview with *The New York Times* last month, President Mubarak said 400 additional tanks also will be sent. (AP)

Death crash

Paris - A French air force pilot with the multinational Gulf force died when his Mirage F1 CR reconnaissance jet crashed during a low-altitude training flight in southern Saudi Arabia. He was the second French serviceman killed in Saudi Arabia. (Reuters)

Clear conscience

Nicosia - Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, Iran's leading judge, responding to Amnesty International reports of human rights abuses, defended capital punishment and said there were no prisoners of conscience in Iran. (Reuters)

Major insistent Saddam must 'disgorge' Kuwait

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN Major firmly ruled out any compromise with President Saddam Hussein of Iraq yesterday and insisted that he must leave Kuwait and make reparations for what he had done.

Urging that the foreign hostages be released without let, hindrance or delay, the prime minister said that the world was not going to stand by and watch Kuwait be invaded and dismantled in the way it was by Baghdad's forces.

Using tougher language on the Gulf issue than he has employed at any time since he moved to 10 Downing Street, Mr Major declared that the whole world believed President Saddam should "disgorge" Kuwait, release the hostages and make reparations for what he has done.

He continued: "There can be no compromise on that

point, and the security council resolutions have made that absolutely clear."

In an interview with BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, he was asked whether the news of the hostages' release would diminish the determination of the international alliance to go to war if necessary. He said: "Nobody wants to go to war if it is avoidable, but you have to realise what has happened there."

"A country has invaded another country; it has deposed a legitimate government and it is in effect dismantling that country day by day. That is not tolerable for the international community."

Mr Major was deliberately cautious over President Saddam's pledge on the hostages. Talking of reports that they would be home by Christ-

mas he said: "I very much hope for their sake and the sake of their families that that turns out to be true. It should be true; they should never have been hostages in the first place, and I hope they will now be released without let, without hindrance and without delay."

Although the release of the hostages was welcome, Iraq must still comply with UN Security Council resolutions demanding its withdrawal from Kuwait.

"I don't think the world is going to stand by and watch Kuwait be invaded and dismantled in the way it is. It cannot do so," Mr Major said. "The prime minister added: 'I do not think we should raise people's expectations until we have those hostages back where they belong with their families.'"

War heritage tempers Beirut joy

FROM ALI JABER IN BEIRUT

THREE days after Lebanese troops were deployed in Beirut and opened roads that had been out of bounds for a decade and half, the euphoria of peace seemed to have subsided as the war's ugly offspring started to become apparent.

For the first time in eight years, residents and reporters were allowed into the battlefield after fighters abandoned their trenches, according to a government plan to free the capital of all militiamen and weapons.

Although familiar with destruction, many Lebanese who went to check on their homes and shops in a front-line district in central Beirut, were shocked by the extent of devastation. Huge estates once worth millions of pounds have become

ruins. The once thriving district and vast neighbourhood, forming the demarcation line which long split the capital into Muslim and Christian sectors, appeared as if infected by smallpox. Buildings pockmarked by thousands of shells and riddled by millions of bullets traded between the warring militiamen since 1975, spread in the heart of Beirut.

Muhsen Hakim, aged 40, vowed not to rebuild his home again when he discovered it reduced to rubble. "I have restored it four times," he said. "The last time in 1983 when I was fooled that the war had ended. It only took three hours for the militiamen to come back and start shooting again."

To other people, the pre-

mature promise of peace brought tragedies. Mohammad Salameh, aged 55, was killed by a landmine when he went to check on his home on the Mar-Mikhael front line, south of Beirut.

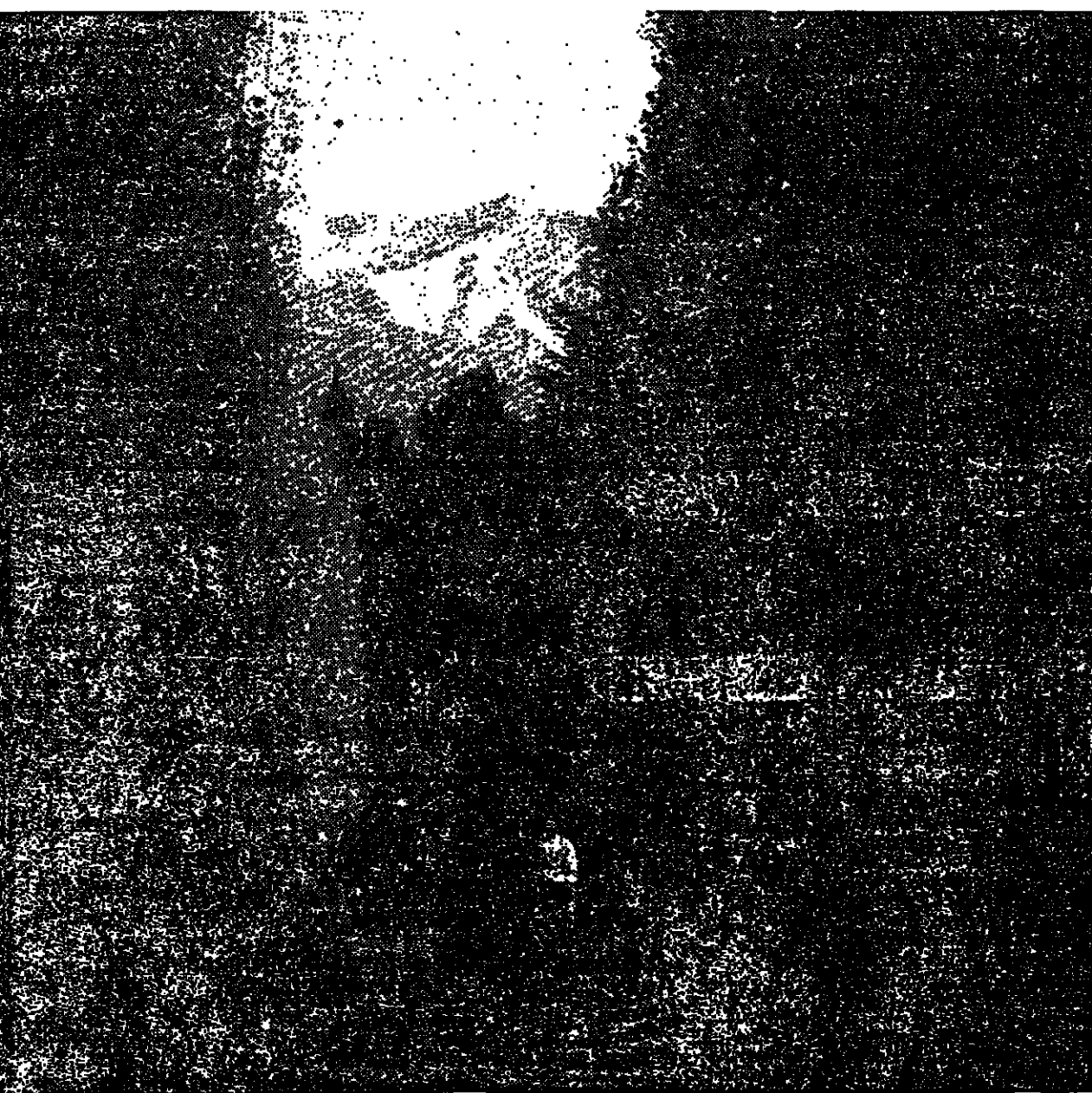
His neighbours said he was so eager to return home, after living for eight years in a shack in the capital's slums, that he ignored warnings by soldiers clearing the area of the militiamen's traces. Army officers advise strollers to walk in the middle of the road and avoid side-alleys. "These pieces are killers," said one soldier. "They are easy to hide. We collected about 60 of them in a small area of four square metres."

A group of middle-aged men and women who remembered Beirut during

its golden days flocked here for a breath of nostalgia. They pointed with disappointment to a wrecked building that used to be the Grand Theatre. It stood there like an old haunted house, stained by soot from two sides, the one facing east Beirut and the other facing the western side, as if both wanted its destruction.

Developers say it will take more than £10 billion and 10 years to rebuild Beirut and its centre.

"This is unthinkable right now with a bankrupt government that struggles to secure enough funds for water and electricity," Fami Zreik, the head of a British relief organization, said. "Maybe Beirut is doomed to remain a city of ruins and devastation," he added.



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How Saddam has been left looking for strings to pull

FROM the outset, the Gulf crisis has been fraught with imponderables and has posed questions which can be answered only as events unfold. I have adhered to one certainty throughout, that President Saddam Hussein should not be allowed to keep Kuwait.

This is not simply because the United States and its allies have invested so much prestige in reversing his aggression; not just because the industrialised world is not prepared to allow such an ambitious dictator to dominate a region which contains 40 per cent of the world's oil reserves; not only because this is the first test of the post-Cold War era of superpower co-operation. All have been factors in the equation. But it was his annexation of Kuwait which united most of the world against him.

His original plan was to invade, establish a puppet government by "popular demand", withdraw and graciously accept from the puppet what he really wanted — two offshore islands,

the whole of the south Rumaila oilfield, and control over Kuwait's oil and financial policies. If this had happened, there would have been an international outcry but nothing like the present situation. The Arab League would have been anxious to patch things up, and Western powers, as well as Moscow, would have been reluctant to break the old habit of doing business with Iraq.

However, he found no Kuwaiti puppets and was obliged to annex a state the independence of which Iraq has accepted for 27 years. This was his decisive miscalculation. For the first time in 45 years, one United Nations member state had forcibly annexed another, a precedent which not one of the 160 members was prepared to countenance. Hence the question has been how and when he will have to disgorge, not whether. Will it be as a result of sanctions, will he do a sudden volte-face, or will force have to be used? For the past four months, President

Saddam Hussein's big miscalculation was to bank on finding Kuwaiti puppets to do his bidding. Anthony Parsons looks at the Iraqi leader's options

Saddam's strategy has been to play for time in the hope that the international coalition against him will fragment and sanctions crumble.

He has played many cards in an attempt to blur the origin of the conflict, and to re-focus regional attention on the Palestine problem, on American "imperialism", and to present Iraq as a potential victim rather than aggressor. He has had only limited success in directing Arab public opinion from governments and virtually none in weakening Western and Soviet resolve by manipulating the hostage issue. The coalition has held firm. The Arab governments with forces in the field have not wavered. The UN security council has adopted 12 resolu-

tions condemning and cumulatively rejecting his acts, tightening sanctions, and finally authorising the use of force to implement its demands. Amazingly to anyone who has lived through decades of Cold War competition, America and the Soviet Union have co-operated throughout. Iraq cannot have expected to be deserted by its closest ally of more than 30 years.

Now the smoke is clearing and the landscape is emerging in hard outline. The reinforcement of the multinational force in Saudi Arabia has shifted the emphasis from defence of the kingdom — the original objective — to an offensive capability sufficient to liberate Kuwait by force. International authority to do so at any time after

January 15 has been granted by Resolution 678 of November 29. It is generally accepted that sanctions alone will take a year or more to work, and that many factors are against so long a delay, namely the continuing ransacking, rape and repopulation of Kuwait, the financial and morale costs of maintaining 500,000 men and women under arms in Saudi Arabia, fear for the solidarity of the coalition, and impatience to bring the conflict to a speedy conclusion. Some of these reasons are more valid than others, but are all part of an equation President Saddam must take into account.

He knows that the first security council resolution calls for immediate negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait to resolve their differences. If he wants a face-saver, there it is and, for all the denials, rumours of a general Middle East peace conference are again filling the air. There is still a chance for a peaceful settlement. By his welcome

decision to release all the foreign hostages, President Saddam has demonstrated that he sees no further mileage in using this atrocious weapon to weaken the resolve of the Western coalition. But he should not imagine that this will diminish international determination to free Kuwait. Nor should he mistake the debate in America as a sign of wavering. The US is an open society indulging in a public democratic process, phenomena with which President Saddam is unfamiliar.

No doubt President Bush will be hammering these points home to Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi foreign minister, as James Baker, the American secretary of state, will be doing to President Saddam in Baghdad. President Saddam has changed course before, and he could do so again.

Sir Anthony Parsons is a former British ambassador to Iran and to the United Nations.

Arab moves aim to heal split and prevent war

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN AMMAN

INTER-Arab diplomacy, designed to promote a negotiated settlement to the Gulf confrontation, is due to intensify after President Saddam Hussein's surprise move to sanction the release of all foreign hostages.

Senior diplomats in the region said yesterday that moves at the United Nations towards action, no matter how vague, on the Palestinian issue, could help soften the bitter differences between the pro and anti-Iraqi camps which have split the Arab League since its summit in Cairo on August 10.

Yemen, which holds the chair of the UN Security Council this month, has announced it will attempt to push for another full summit. "The summit would aim at preventing a destructive war in the region which will reach every corner of the Arab homeland and will harm all the Arab people," said Ali Salem al-Beddi, the Yemeni vice-president.

Arab diplomatic sources said that attempts were also being made to try to arrange a mini-summit involving King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and President Saddam, with Algeria as the possible host. Efforts late last month by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, to organise such a meeting collapsed after a stern rebuff from Riyadh. Ministers from Iraq and Kuwait are due to attend a meeting of the ten-member Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, which opens in Cairo today. Although Egyptian and Iraqi officials have said that the Gulf confrontation will not be raised at the meeting, Western observers believe that delegates may take the opportunity for some behind-the-scenes diplomacy.

Nabil Nejm al-Takriti, Baghdad's ambassador to Egypt, has said that Iraq will attend the meeting, which he described as "routine". Abdel Hadi Mohammad Kandil, the Egyptian oil minister, said that any attempt by Iraq to block Kuwaiti participation would fail.

The meeting follows dip-

lomatic speculation that one formula being floated for a Gulf compromise involves an Iraqi withdrawal from all parts of occupied Kuwait, except for the contested Rumaila oil field. In exchange, the Iraqis would be given a pledge of non-aggression from the allies and the prospect of discussions about leasing two Kuwaiti islands which would give it greater access to the Gulf.

"If the meeting proceeds smoothly, it will indicate that the Iraqis and Kuwaitis are still able to work together in an Arab forum," a European envoy said. "There could be more diplomatic significance to this session than immediately meets the eye."

Earlier, Iraq had requested for the Opec meeting to be held in Europe to precede the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries gathering in Vienna on December 12. Mr Kandil said that this demand had been rejected by the other members.

Opec includes seven Opec members — Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Libya, Algeria, Iraq and Kuwait — plus three smaller Arab producers, Egypt, Syria and Bahrain. Unlike Opec, it does not discuss price and production policies, but concentrates on promoting inter-Arab co-operation. The agenda for today's meeting focuses on the organisation's work plan and budget for 1991.

Since August 6, Iraq has been unable to export any oil as a result of the UN trade embargo. The shortfall on the world market of around 4 million barrels of crude oil a day has been largely replaced by increased production from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Venezuela.

Although Saudi Arabia has not wavered in its resolute stand against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, there have been hints in recent weeks that senior Saudi government figures are concerned about the regional repercussions of an all-out war which could eliminate Iraq's military potential as a regional bulwark against Israel and Iran.



Show of hands: members of an Italian delegation sitting at the front of the 250-strong Iraqi National Assembly yesterday as it decided overwhelmingly to back President Saddam Hussein's decision to free all foreign hostages. There were 15 votes against

Israel fears summit will dictate terms

By RICHARD OWEN

TO THE outside world, the fierce Israeli opposition to the idea of an international peace conference on the Middle East often appears baffling. What could be more reasonable than a conference involving "all parties to the dispute" and the great powers, perhaps the United Nations as well, given the dismal failure of the parties themselves to resolve the Palestinian question in the 23 years since Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza as the fruits of the 1967 war?

But as Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, explained this week in London and will repeat in Washington, Israel's visceral antagonism to the idea of a peace conference stems in the first place from its fear that "foreign bodies" will impose a solution not to Israel's liking.

Instead, Israel wants "direct negotiations" with the Arab states and also with "acceptable" Palestinian figures in the occupied territories, and not Palestinians from the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Israel wants no part in "linkage" between Kuwait and Palestine, and argues that a peace conference presented as part of a solution to the Gulf conflict would hand President Saddam Hussein such linkage on a plate. A

peace conference is seen in Jerusalem as a device for forcing Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories before it has negotiated the "right terms", including security guarantees.

A second Israeli objection is that the Western concept of "parties to the dispute" includes the PLO, which Israel regards as a terrorist organisation rather than "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people". Israel was delighted when America broke off its 18-month dialogue with the PLO last May. But Israeli leaders still fear that the Western powers and the Soviet Union take the PLO's profession of moderation at face value, and will want the organization included in any settlement.

Washington's ambivalence over proposals at the UN for an international conference have therefore caused alarm in Israel. America's attitude is attributed in part to its new relationship with the Soviet Union, which has long favoured a Middle East settlement, as has the European Community. American wavering on the issue also reflects the deterioration in US-Israeli relations with the Bush administration, with even American Jewish groups im-

patient at Israeli behaviour over the settling of Soviet immigrants in Arab east Jerusalem.

What Israel might accept, diplomats suggest, is a revision to the kind of tripartite meeting on the Palestinian question between Israel, Egypt and America, which was floated by Washington earlier

this year. But what Israel cannot stomach is any suggestion of a conference under the auspices of the UN, which in the Israeli view has an in-built bias against the Jewish state.

Unless America is prepared to bring overwhelming pressure to bear, Israel seems certain to continue to take the view that it can only rely on

itself for its security.

If, on the other hand, the US, Britain, Europe and the Soviet Union unite in supporting a peace conference, Israel will have to decide whether to defy such pressure and face isolation, or swallow its many reservations and begin to lay down conditions for Israeli participation.

Letters, page 11

Revived intifada breeds despair

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN JABALIYA REFUGEE CAMP, OCCUPIED GAZA STRIP

THE Palestinian question is high on the agenda again as the intifada enters its fourth year this weekend. For the right-wing government of Yitzhak Shamir, the American turn towards favouring a Middle East peace conference because of the Gulf conflict confirms Israel's nightmare: that President Saddam Hussein's attempt to link the Kuwait and Palestine issues will eventually succeed.

But for Palestinians in the squalid and teeming refugee camps of Gaza, this is precisely what makes President Saddam the hero of the hour. Their energies and hopes refuelled, many young Palestinians are stepping up the violence in an effort to make Israeli troops leave the occupied territories despite Mr Shamir's vow never to make concessions under duress.

"Even if there is a war and Saddam Hussein is defeated, we will still hail him as the man who put life back into the revolt," said Mahmoud. He is a young Palestinian of the kind who pop up from nowhere to take the place of arrested or deported activists, his anti-Israeli anger stoked by three years of searches and humiliations at the hands of Israeli troops. To some extent, Mahmoud and others like him have modified their support for President Saddam. Palestinians are aware that their

support for him as a strong Arab leader is in danger of being confused with support for him as a brutal dictator.

But the Iraqi leader's portrait is still everywhere. His actions, which turned the Middle East upside down, have combined with the riots on Temple Mount on October 8, in which 18 Arabs died, to



Arens: admits that there is no magic formula

galvanise an uprising which was showing signs of flagging. The mood on both sides of the conflict is still one of frustration and despair. If there is to be a solution, it is likely to come only after even more violent conflict. Three years after the revolt began with riots at Jabaliya, Palestinians still face a determined Israeli response. According to the United Nations, which ad-

ministrates the camps, 50,000 Arabs have been wounded in Gaza alone over the past three years, 18,000 of them under the age of 15.

Since then, 747 Palestinians have died (the Israeli army puts the figure at 623). Fifty-four Israelis have died, 23 in the occupied territories and 31 in Israel. Three hundred and eleven Arabs have been murdered by fellow Arabs as alleged collaborators. Three hundred and seventy-seven Palestinian homes have been demolished as punishment for "terrorist offences" and about 14,000 Palestinians remain in detention.

What the statistics do not describe is the way the revolt has fundamentally changed Arab-Jewish relations. At Jabaliya, where chickens and goats roost around in the rotting rubbish which litters the dusty streets, a high wire fence has gone up between the main mosque in the centre of the camp and the Israeli army post opposite. Children from the camp, which contains 60,000 people, still defy tear gas and the fence to lob stones at troops. But the fence symbolises the barriers between Jews and Arabs as the concept of "co-existence" between the two communities crumbles.

In Israel, both left and right have concluded that Arabs and Jews can no longer live

together. The left-wing solution is partition, with the West Bank and Gaza given over to Palestinian self-rule. The right-wing answer is to annex the territories and expel their Arab inhabitants. The latter view has gained ground recently, with even many moderate Israelis concluding that "painful surgery" in the form of a "transfer of Arabs" may be necessary.

Jewish settler groups proudly point out that, despite the intifada, the number of settlers in the territories has increased by 30 per cent to nearly 100,000 since 1987.

In response, the Palestinians, too, have become more militant. Several incidents this week involved guns. The Israeli army has vowed to take "special measures" to deal with armed violence, and some Palestinians are worried that turning from stones to guns will damage the Palestinian image abroad.

Three years of revolt have hardened attitudes and created policies of despair. The short-term solution of the Shamir government is to restore the "green line" by strengthening controls at checkpoints between Israel and the occupied territories. Moshe Arens, the defence minister, still maintains that Israel is overcoming the intifada, but admits: "There is no magic formula."

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THE ROYAL
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APPEAL



A joyful Book of Numbers

Clifford Longley

The Church of England treats its annual membership statistics as householders treat letters from the bank manager. They usually contain bad news. There were surprised smiles on Thursday, therefore, when the 1988 church statistics revealed a not wealth unimaginable then at least a small drop in the overdraft.

In the first real increase since church leaders stopped hoping for one 20 years ago, the "usual Sunday attendance" figure, which is generally taken to indicate the size of the church's core membership, was up 4,000 over the 1987 figure at 1,165,000. The number aged 16 and over in that figure rose by 13,000, offset by a 9,000 fall among the under-16s.

For several years measurements of church membership have been static after a long period of steady decline, and the question everybody was asking was whether, when the plateau ended, the graph would turn up or down. The sociological evidence suggests that the primary factors influencing church attendance are remote from the church's control.

Plotted on a long time-scale, for instance since the start of the century, Easter communicant numbers in the Church of England and the Church of Scotland show a very striking consistency. Not only do the larger hills and troughs occur in both graphs over the same period, but so do many of the short-term wobbles. Roman Catholic church attendance since the turn of the century is too much affected by the ebb and flow of Irish immigration to be useful, but other measures of Catholic activity, such as adult conversions, also show a correlation with these trends in other denominations.

Whatever the factors are, they clearly do not have much to do with the policies or beliefs of a particular denomination. Converting to Catholicism and attending Church of Scotland worship at Easter are, in religious terms, unrelated or even opposing activities. It is as if there is in the community at large a level of disposition towards or against religious belief and practice, un-specific to denomination, which fluctuates invisibly. If the recovery in Anglican figures marks the start of such a trend, therefore, a similar recovery should be noticed soon by the other churches. If not, it is unlikely that Anglicans will buck the trend for long.

Increases and decreases in church membership represent movements between a core group, attenders, and an outer concentric circle, friends and relations of attenders. Almost all those who become regular church attenders have some previous family or cultural attachment to their church: it was in their social background. And those who stop going to church move into the general unchurched population

but into that outer circle, and remain potential church members for the future. Total apostasy is as uncommon as out-of-the-blue conversion.

Each denomination has, surrounding its core, such a penumbra of lapsed members or members-in-waiting. This outer circle consists of those who, through social and family connections, are still in touch with that church at one remove. But though it is those connections which may one day chart the route into active membership, the forces impelling people in that direction appear to come from elsewhere. Otherwise denominations would contract and expand independently of one another instead of in step.

The net movement into or out of a denomination's active core — the 4,000 Anglican increase in 1988, for instance — is the balance between much larger movements in both directions at any one time. Nobody knows how many Anglicans stopped going to church in 1988, only that slightly more of them started.

The inward flux, from the outer circle to the core, must be influenced by factors common to all denominations. The only thing they have in common is that they are surrounded by a secular culture. So there must be some influence arising from within that culture which is felt by all those in one of these church outer circles. By definition secular cultures are unfriendly to religion; they do not deliberately promote it. It must be the secular culture itself that repels such people.

What influences the outward flow must again be independent of the state of health of any one denomination, or the effect would not be common to all. In such cases the secular culture must be drawing such people towards itself because it seems good.

This explanation has large implications for the churches' strategy in the forthcoming "decade of evangelisation" which starts next month. It identifies the battlefield as being "out there", in secular society, and the key issue, the adequacy of a secular culture for the satisfaction of emotional and spiritual needs.

It also suggests that the most effective recruitment strategy for the churches would be to attack secularism as shallow and unattractive, in order to encourage people to feel unsatisfied by it. And the real target for such an evangelistic strategy would be those sub-groups in secular society that have some existing link with a church, however tenuous. For if they can be made discontented with the secular terrain they inhabit, they will move towards the church to which they are linked, of their own accord. And the Anglican figures, if they mean anything, may signal that secularism is beginning to lose its grip.

...and moreover

MATTHEW PARRIS

I have not, as I write, seen the *Saturday Review* that will accompany this paper. But if it's anything like previous editions, it will be a splendid read, containing numerous features that it would be a crime to miss.

I resent this. *Saturday* is precious, does not last long and ought to be careful. It is not a day for guilt, not a day to labour under a sense of imperatives unfulfilled. So to place before me, for the premium of five pence extra, more good writing than I have the least chance of finishing, and thus the certain prospect of ending my day in failure — going to bed ashamed that into the bin go pictures and prose which in a bookshop would fetch a hundred times as much — can only be cruel.

Nor would there be any point in saving it for Sunday. With *Sunday* comes *The Sunday Times*, in all its multi-sectioned glory, bringing much important analysis of the problems facing the new prime minister, and many gripping accounts of the last days of the old one. And there will be that marvellous books section, with sparkling reviews of all the books I shall not have time to read... No: if there is, through sheer diligence, a faint chance of breaking the back of the *Saturday Review* before midnight on Saturday, there is none whatsoever of making so much as a dent in *The Sunday Times* before Monday — and Monday's *Spectator*, delivered on Friday? And my weekend *Economist*...

With a third, the latest issue of *Scientific American* hits the doormat in its polythene wrapper, packed with news of the most thought-provoking kind. My heart sinks.

Because it's not that I don't enjoy reading. I wish I didn't. I wish the perusal of fine writing and the absorbing of important news were a tiresome chore: worthy, maybe, but dull. If that were so then the choice would be the age-old choice of work versus play, duty versus pleasure. We all strike that balance somewhere; we know we must and we know how to. When pleasure is sin, and virtue pain, the dilemma is as familiar as the solution: a bit of both, thanks, but neither in excess.

No, that's not the problem,

Reading the *Saturday Review* would be a sinless pleasure. It doesn't cost anything, it isn't difficult, no balance has to be struck... it's just...

...that life is short. Yet the minds into which today's publishing gains me entrance are better than mine, their holiday snaps are more professional than mine, their experiences wider than mine, they have done more interesting things than I, and they write about it so damnably well. Why don't I just throw in the towel, buy a year's subscription to the better publications, a roomful of tinned soup and a hundred crates of lager?

I caught myself last Sunday, the entire *Sunday Times* stacked before me, and a pencil in my hand, doing a remarkably stupid thing. I was flicking through each section, speed-reading the "contents", and making a mark against what I thought I ought to come back to.

That's the stupid thing. The remarkably stupid thing was under my breath I was muttering "good" each time I spotted an article I did not want to read. Separating the wheat from the chaff, it was the chaff I was unconsciously hoping to find: hoping, because then I would not feel guilty about discarding it. The pleasure in that discovery reminds me of one's feeling on determining that, with the person on whom one has had a tiresome crush, there is simply no chance at all. It's such a relief.

The logical conclusion of this approach would be to react with pleasure if I could be sure that the entire newspaper, for which I had just paid good money, was worthless dross. The next step would be to buy the newspaper which was the least likely to contain anything worth reading. Choice is the cruellest thing. I blame Mrs Thatcher.

There seem to be two ways to go to carry on paying writers to write but to withdraw their work from the market, stockpile it until it is out of date, then send it by the lorryload to the Russians. The free-market solution is to fill the gap by providing a quality publication that can be carried with pride, but which is guaranteed to contain nothing of the slightest consequence.

The Times Profile: with £7 billion to hand, Lord Hanson, epitome of the Thatcher years, is Europe's most potent capitalist. His next victim is likely to be the biggest

Predator game to the end

To the boardrooms of the world, Lord Hanson is the predator they would least like to encounter: he has a habit of winning his takeover battles. This week, those who sit at the boardroom tables of corporate Britain were looking again to his defence after Lord Hanson's master company, Hanson plc, announced it had the best part of £7 billion in the bank.

The Hanson "war chest" is probably the strongest in the world. His pile of ready cash, which grows by the day, could be supplemented by borrowings of up to £16 billion. Few companies are beyond his reach.

Hanson accumulates cash for one purpose only: to make takeovers, and the bigger his company grows, the larger the companies it acquires need to be. During the course of one takeover bid, Lex, the influential investment column in the *Financial Times*, identified this need for ever more expensive acquisitions as a weakness. Hanson has turned it into a strength, enabling him to search out companies which are out of the reach of all but a few.

Lord Hanson describes his firm as an industrial management company. Outside observers would call it a conglomerate, if they were watching Hanson plc move into yet another area of activity, while those on the wrong end of one of his bids might call it an asset stripper. (Hanson's dedication to extracting the ultimate from its purchases came to the surface this week when a senior judge criticised the way Hanson was handling the pension scheme of one of its acquisitions. The company had wanted to free £130 million for its own use by switching the pensions into a new fund. The judge disagreed.)

Lord Hanson's story is no rags to riches saga. He was born into a solid Huddersfield business family in 1922. The family haulage business, once the most important supplier of horses to the British Army — was nationalised for £3 million in 1949. This was the signal for James Hanson to take his 6'4" frame off to America. There he garnered a taste for red-blooded capitalism, an American wife, and a lifelong business partner, Gordon (now Sir Gordon) White. A brief engagement to Audrey Hepburn gave him an undesired reputation as a playboy, though his subsequent 31-year marriage to Geraldine Kaelin — they have three children — has done much to kill this image.

Nevertheless, his period in Hollywood, where he was the consort of starlets some of whom, like him, turned into stars, has left a permanent taste for the glamorous side of life, and a few close friends in showbiz. Frank Sinatra is one of them. When in London, he is Hanson's party guest.

Never poor, he is now seriously rich, with a personal fortune estimated at some £100 million. His remuneration from Hanson plc tops £1.5 million a year. There are houses in London, Berkshire and two in America. Horses are a habit that runs in the family rather than a consuming passion. His father provided horses for promising show jumpers such as Pat Smythe, but Lord Hanson himself gave up showjumping many years ago. It was his elder brother Bill, who died of cancer at the age of 29, who was the star of the arena.

Dubbed Lord Moneybags by the *Sun*, Lord Hanson is nevertheless determined to be seen as a member of "society". He reinforces his claim to a place at the top tables with extravagant gestures that lead the "very private" peer into the very public columns of the diary writers. His wedding present (paid for by the firm) to the Duchess of Kent was a course of helicopter flying lessons. He drives, or is driven in, Bentley motor cars with personalised number plates. His helicopter is available when needed by those he favours. He often lunches in the main dining room of the Connaught Hotel. He is not so private as journalists who fail to get interviews are apt to pretend.

The Conservative party has also been a major beneficiary. Although knighted by Harold Wilson, he was given his peerage by Margaret Thatcher and is a dedicated Tory. Hanson plc donated £80,000 to the Conservatives last year, and the full accounts (in which political donations must be disclosed) will show, when they are published in a week or two, that the same amount was paid over this year. Hanson plc also put financial resources behind the establishment of city technology colleges.

In his annual statements to shareholders, Lord Hanson has seldom failed to praise the achievements of the Thatcher government. If there were critics, they were kept for the occasional private meetings at Number Ten. As the Tory knives were plunging into Mrs Thatcher's back last month, Lord Hanson added his signature to a letter to *The Times* urging the party to cease the attack. "The commercial and economic welfare of this country has been in the safest hands," the letter said.

But when Mrs Thatcher decided to go, pragmatism took over. Lord Hanson threw his weight behind John Major. "It is good news for Britain and for the rest of the world," he said, after Major was elected. "People overseas have been shocked and dismayed by the apparent rejection of Mrs Thatcher and I think they will welcome the appointment of a man very close to current policy."

On Major: "We are in a difficult downward situation and this man recognises the need to keep matters under control and not make too many changes. It is very good to have a young and energetic and able minister at No 10, and hopefully someone who will be there for many years."

While accepting and perhaps even quietly welcoming a change that might give the Tories their fourth consecutive election victory, Lord Hanson, together with a coterie of like-minded businessmen, is determined that the woman who helped put so much into their own and their shareholders' pockets, will achieve immortality. Plans are well advanced for a £10 million Thatcher Foundation, funded by the pals. Its purpose is secondary to its name.



Hanson's business is built on the twin pillars of Britain and America. With European trade liberalisation, industrialists on the Continent will start to tremble

activity and move out. The company's activities are as fluid as water, and he is devoted to none of them.

That ability to move in and out of industries, in and out of companies, to sell as well as to buy, is a crucial element in the Hanson success. There is little or no connection between the various parts of the sprawling empire.

'Plans for a £10 million Thatcher Foundation are advanced. Hanson and friends are determined that the woman who helped put so much into their own and shareholders' pockets will achieve immortality'

except that Hanson businesses are likely to be simple and capable of generating cash.

The business has been built on the twin pillars of Britain and America. Europe has yet to feel the ground shake as Hanson fires his corporate guns, but as the Continent opens its financial markets and European companies are forced to drop their protected structures, Hanson will move in.

The firm sponsors the Derby, through one of Hanson's early purchases, the Ever Ready battery business. When Hanson launched his bid, Ever Ready was on its knees, spending too much on research and too little on making its plants efficient in their use of capital and labour. It is now, once again, this country's leading maker of dry-cell batteries. That Hanson magic has worked, and a contested takeover bid is vindicated.

But investment in sponsorship is expected to make a return just as much as investment in plant and machinery. Hanson gets massive publicity for the Ever Ready Derby, but reckons there would be even more if the race were run on a Saturday. Sir Gordon White, who runs Hanson in America, is working on it, and the Derby is likely to move.

While Lord Hanson has given his name to the firm, it owes much of its development to White's extraordinary skills. He waved goodbye to Huddersfield in the 1970s, setting off for America with just £3,000 of Hanson money in his pocket. That was all he was allowed, because exchange controls were still in force, but he turned it into a fortune for the firm. In the latest financial year, the American arm, Hanson Industries, made trading profits of £416 million.

Hanson exists for the benefit of its shareholders, and it is one of its chairman's ambitions that the wealth it has generated and accumulated over a quarter of a century be handed over. Hanson has taken over many businesses

which had made takeovers themselves merely because they had the money to do so.

The prime example was Imperial Group, the tobacco company that dominates the British cigarette market. Tobacco is a "mature business" which does not require funds for growth, so that profits can be accumulated in cash rather than ploughed back. Imperial spent its shareholders' money unwisely, and when Hanson made its bid, Imperial fell. Hanson does not have any intention of making the same mistake, but the bigger the group becomes, the shorter becomes the list of potential takeovers.

There was a sign, a rare sign, this year that Lord Hanson's sure touch faltered, missed a step. Hanson went into talks with the government over the possible purchase of PowerGen, one of the two electricity generating companies to be privatised in the next few months. The talks became public, and came to nothing. The decision to pull out was probably right for Hanson, but outsiders wonder why it was at the table in the first place.

Within the group there is still room for the small venture, especially if it reflects a personal interest. Lord Hanson put his taste for "light music" to the commercial test by backing, through the firm, the London commercial radio station, Melody Radio. He even made a commercial for the station, again giving a lie to the popular idea that he is a shy, retiring, near reclus.

There's still a bit of Yorkshire about him, not only in his title — Baron Hanson of Edginton in the County of West Yorkshire — or in the fact that Sir Gordon White is a fellow Yorkshireman, but in his straight talking, honest approach to business and the pursuit of profit. When the City was rushing towards the climax of the bull market, when Ernest Saunders of Guinness and Gerald Ranson of Heron were putting themselves on the wrong side of the law, Baron Hanson of Edginton was still playing a straight bat. His victims have frequently searched in his past and his present for dirt. They have found colour, but nothing more criminal than the occasional dropped article.

Nearly four years ago, Lord Hanson gave himself five more years of business. The logical conclusion to the Hanson plc years would be for the company to cease to expand, sell all the assets, completing the implosion by handing back the proceeds to shareholders.

But two factors make that unlikely. The first is that the tax system of this country is hostile to repayments of shareholders' capital. The second is that Lord Hanson is strikingly fit and it is easy to knock ten years off his age. He is still going strong and sees no reason to retire. He loves America, where he spends half his time and keeps fit cycling in California. An elaborate logistical system keeps him in touch with the office in Knightsbridge. Couriers run around the globe with mail and messages, documents and data.

His corporate guns are loaded with billions of pounds. He is ready to pull the trigger on another massive deal. Until the direction of fire can be seen, there will be many a nervous chairman dreading the 7am knock on the door and the and-delivered letter which announces, just before the market opens, that his company is the next Hanson quarry.

His Excellency regrets...

As the western hostages look forward to being back with their families for Christmas, one Briton seems set to remain in Baghdad for the foreseeable future: our ambassador, Harold Walker.

The call of duty is particularly cruel as Walker had hoped to be home for the wedding of his eldest daughter, Caroline, in St Paul's Cathedral on January 12 — three days before the expiry of the Security Council deadline for Saddam Hussein to pull his forces out of Kuwait. Caroline got engaged to accountant Peter Walker, son of a former chief executive of BP, on holiday in Kenya just before Kuwait was invaded, and immediately began planning the wedding.

Even if Walker cannot get home to give his daughter away, the wedding will still go ahead. The Dean of St Paul's, the Very Rev Eric Evans, an old friend of Walker, will officiate at the ceremony in the crypt chapel. Two hundred guests have been invited to a reception at the nearby Stationers Hall.

The Foreign Office is pessimistic about the chances of the ambassador being able to don his tails for the occasion. A spokesman said: "The standard procedure is for people to judge when to take their leave against the commitments they have at the particular time."

Sadly, after the criticism Walker suffered when he was on holiday in Woking in August when Saddam's tanks first rolled into Kuwait, it seems certain that his sense of duty will not allow him to retrench precisely the same moment British and American tanks may be heading in the other direction, even for what ought to be one of the proudest moments of his life.

"We do have cabinet government now." Tory MP Jeremy Hanley told a meeting of his Kew constituents last week. "Ministers coming out of their first meeting looked like the prisoners coming out of jail in Fido." Hanley too can now share in that sense of release, though how joyous remains to be seen. A few days later he was given his first ministerial appointment, at the Northern Ireland Office.

Semi-conviction

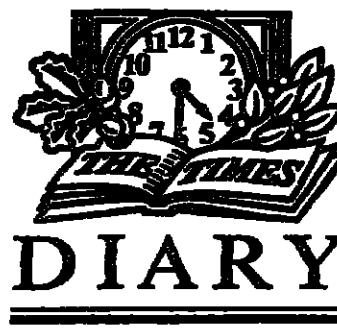
Is it possible to be a good Christian and not believe in God? No problem, says the author and playwright John Mortimer. The man who once told the Bishop of Durham that he wished he could be a Christian has now told the *Catholic Herald*: "Since I said that to the bishop I have come to the conclusion that I am a Christian. Except of course that I don't believe in God."

Paul Goodman, the *Herald's* interviewer, asked in bafflement how he could reconcile the two. Mortimer replied: "I'm part of a Christian civilisation... I write within a Christian ethic... but I can't take God."

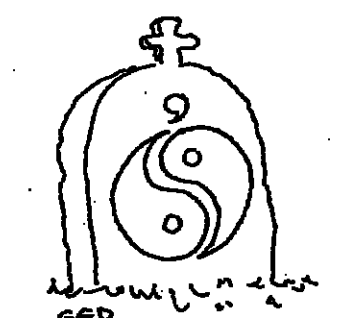
Then, harking back to his days at the Bar, Mortimer said the problem was partly theological, partly one of presentation. The image I have of God is so unlikeable that if he existed I would not be at all on his side. I can't believe in God as a judge because I don't like judges very much.

Spaced out

It is important for writers to have a good grasp of spelling and punctuation, it is essential for a stonemason: if he slips, he cannot rely on the wonders of the self-correcting typewriter or a couple of computer keyboard strokes to put things right.



subject of the award-winning film *Chariots of Fire*. Staff at Edinburgh University, who saw the inscription on its plinth immediately before the unveiling ceremony, were appalled to read: "His career reached its peak. The stonemason's equivalent of Tippecanoe was hastily summoned and some skillful concealing work conducted, leaving a slight gap in the middle of the offending word. But it could have been even worse."



The statue is now on its way to Shandong province in China, where Liddell worked as a missionary. The stonemasons are thankful they were not asked to inscribe the tribute in Chinese too.

Best of the versed

The distinction between good bad poetry as opposed to really bad poetry is, no doubt, a subtle one, but those who

are confident that their versifying belongs firmly in the former category are invited to compete for the title of best bad poet in the world. The competition, held under the auspices of the International Society for Humour Studies, is named after the American poet, Julia Moore, who was described by Mark Twain as having the touch "that makes an intentionally humorous episode pathetic and an intentionally pathetic one funny". Entrants are being sent a piece of her finest for inspiration:

Childhood days have passed and gone,
And it fills my heart with pain
To think that youth will never more
Return to me again.
And now kind friends, what I have wrote,
I hope you will pass o'er,
And not criticise as some have done
Hitherto here before.

The contest's organiser, Don Niles of Arizona State University, hopes for entries from all over the world. "We are looking for writing so deliberately rotten that it both entertains and instructs," he says.

Lucky break

The advertising industry, chastened by recession, is hoping that the end of the Thatcher era, which spawned its greatest successes and excesses, could yet prove its saving. Several agencies have already run campaigns based on the change of prime minister, using Mrs Thatcher as a prop to sell soap powder and dog food. More are on the way, and the industry believes the former prime minister will go on and on selling products for months, if not years, to come.

So far the ads have been run without Mrs Thatcher's permission, but the Advertising Standards Authority, which recently

looked at test cases involving unauthorised use of prominent personalities, is unconcerned, providing they are done in good taste. "Any advertising executive worth his salary will be trying to run something following her resignation," says the ASA.

Mrs Thatcher is being inundated with offers to lend her imprimatur officially to a variety of products, although a spokesman says she is unlikely ever to take up any such offers.

Her refusal will leave advertising agencies undeterred and their ingenuity undimmed. The most enterprising so far was that working for a Guildford carpet firm. Only 69 minutes after the announcement of Mrs Thatcher's resignation, the local radio station was running a commercial declaring that its carpets "will probably last longer than even the longest-lasting prime minister". Do not be surprised to see or hear ads featuring Sir Denis over the next few days, either.

Dizzy heights

Sir Denis has a splendid role model in Sir Vavasour "Finch", from *Diana's Sybil*. Speaking of his fellow baronets, he declares: "Evidently the body destined to save this country. Blending all sympathies: the crown of which they are the peculiar champions; the nobles of whom they are the popular heroes; the people who recognize in them their natural leaders."

He conjures up a delightful picture of the entire order moving in procession to Westminster accompanied by their elder sons, besides "their mothers and wives, no longer degraded to the nomenclature of a sheriff's lady, but resuming their legal or analogical dignities, and styled the 'honourable baronesses' with their coronet and robe." Perhaps Mrs Thatcher should reconsider her renunciation of the title.



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GATT ON THE ROCKS

The collapse of the "Gatt talks" in Brussels yesterday is a disaster. The world is not too strong. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations sought to liberalise \$1,000 billion worth of global trade, affecting the economic freedom and prosperity of hundreds of millions.

The EC's refusal to dismantle the fraudulent market-rigging cartel it calls the common agricultural policy (CAP) drove the talks on to the rocks. The world is poised to enter a cycle of protectionism and "managed" trade which will exact a dreadful price in jobs, inflated consumer prices and market opportunities, and cripple the economic advance of the Third World and Eastern Europe.

Rearmament for trade wars has already begun. Recession will provide further ammunition as industrial lobbies seek shelter against competition. Negotiations are to resume in January but after this week's monumental failure, the momentum built up since 1986, when the talks were launched, will be hard to regain. Suspension of the talks may be no more than a euphemism for breakdown.

Enthusiasm for the European ideal has been allowed, with disastrous results, to eclipse liberal clear-sightedness on world trade. The Gatt negotiation was the first serious test of a common European foreign policy and of the EC's reputation as a group committed to free trade rather than cartelisation. The European Commission, logically in view of the creation of a frontier-free EC in 1992, negotiates on behalf of the Twelve in trade matters.

The Community, the world's largest trading power, has failed the test ignominiously. It flexed its communal muscle only to reveal itself as a protector of the markets and privileges of the world's super-rich. Who can now doubt that the single market in 1992, rather than setting the world an example of regional free trade, will lead to the erection of Fortress Europe?

What is so extraordinary is that the EC has been prepared to sacrifice real gains to its own inhabitants for the sake of just one interest, the agriculture lobby, which accounts for less than 3 per cent of its GDP, yet demands of its consumers and taxpayers more than \$100 billion a year. In the run-up to this week's "final" Gatt session, the Commission had claimed to be ahead of the member states. But the Commission failed to persuade ministers to recognise the strength of feeling overseas on

their intransigence. It failed to lay before them the magnitude of the price of breakdown which will be borne by Europe's more important commercial interests.

The failure has been equally culpable at national level. For the sake of "European unity", other governments allowed French and German appeasement of their farm lobbies to set EC policy. Four years have been wasted in which the EC could have been developing new systems of rural support which would distort trade less than price subsidies do. Mrs Thatcher's warning of impending disaster at the Rome summit in October was brushed aside, and the subject kept off the agenda to allow the Council of Ministers to concentrate on, of all things, plans to extend areas of common policy-making.

John Gummer, Britain's farm minister, spent this week proving his Eurocredentials by defending the CAP. His outburst yesterday against the Americans for "intransigence" was outrageous. If John Major were true to his predecessor's memory, Mr Gummer would be fired. Of the 15 areas of trade covered by this negotiation, only agriculture remains deadlocked. Every other government, including that of the US, gave ground in agriculture, trade in services and other areas.

The EC alone refused to negotiate on a Swedish compromise to reduce farm protection, which was roughly equidistant between the EC's proposals and those sought by the rest of the world. After that, nobody had any reason to expect significant results from an EC meeting which was just starting when the gavel descended on the whole show.

To save the Uruguay round will now take a miracle of concentration and foresight. Nothing but a radical shift in the EC's farm trade policy will do the trick. That is far more important than plans for economic and political union and must go straight to the top of the EC agenda at next week's Rome summit. The Commission cannot move at the speed required. John Major's offer to mediate between Brussels and Washington should be accepted by Helmut Kohl and Francois Mitterrand, chief architects of this wretched mess. Mr Major flies to Washington on December 22 and should be able to take with him a negotiable offer. If Italy, which is currently in the EC chair, refuses to put such a mandate on the agenda of the Rome summit, Mr Major should refuse to attend.

MARXISM MAROONED

This morning the Communist Party of Great Britain begins a special congress. Delegates are expected to obliterate the hallmarks that gave the communists their distinctive identity until the year of reckoning, 1989. Now apparently, everything must go: from the use of communism in the party's name (long since scrapped in central Europe in favour of less tarnished titles) to the strict party discipline of "democratic centralism" and adherence to Marxism-Leninism as a corporate ideology. Membership is down to 6,000 and falling fast. The CPGB's new leader, Nina Temple, gives a warning that "on present trends the party would cease to exist in 1994." It may even abolish itself as a party and become a sort of political club.

Temple as it may be to dismiss Marxism as an exotic and now faded bloom, almost extinct in Britain outside the tropical climate of institutions of higher education, Marx's harder derivatives still flourish in the hedge-rows of British life. They include the earnest, Eurocommunist primulas who write for *Marxism Today*, the CPGB's theoretical journal; the Stalinists who proliferate in the darker corners of the trade union movement; the colourful but toxic flora of Trotskyism; and the venus fly-traps of Labour's hard left.

The prestige of some older academic Marxists — most prolific, the historian Eric Hobsbawm — continues to command a respectful hearing. Since the renaissance of Conservatism after 1979 induced a sectarian renaissance of leftist ideology, Marxian explanations of Thatcherism gained some currency. They seemed to offer an historical context and dualist moral vision, equal and opposite to the new enemy. They were virile, as against the homely, latitudinarian Fabianism

of the new Labour party. What is now to be the harvest of those interminable redefinitions of socialism? It is no thanks to them that Labour is back in contention, or that the grand instigator of the Tory revival has been booted to the backbenches. How much did the Marxist cuckoos in Labour's doctrinal nest contribute to this reversal of fortunes?

The answer is nothing. The left did not predict Mrs Thatcher's downfall — indeed seems rather miffed at the Tory party shooting their fox — any more than it predicted the collapse of communism abroad. John Smith's plausibility as an alternative Chancellor — a key to Labour's revival — has nothing to do with long-winded critiques of "late capitalism". While the British public is attracted by promises of better public services, it will vote Labour into office only when it is satisfied that its leaders would make fit custodians of capitalism.

Would Labour really benefit by "passing through an intellectual revolution", as the Marxist theoreticians Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques demand? Perhaps, but only if they find themselves with another spell in opposition. Messrs Hall and Jacques fear that "even in Thatcherism's death throes, Labour is still unable to break out of the former's shadow." But they must know that Labour's best hope is to remain firmly in that shadow.

Neil Kinnock has wisely abandoned this marooned intelligentsia to its fate. It is his resolute hugging of the shores of real-life Britain which has carried him within sight of office. But it would be childish of the British not to applaud harmless loyalty to a lost cause. Perhaps this weekend's conference should be listed as an historic monument.

TASTE, TIMING AND TELEVISION

Twice in the past two weeks independent television has been involved in making judgments about public taste. The Independent Broadcasting Authority eventually decided that a raunchy video by the pop singer Madonna, banned in the US, could be shown in Britain after 9pm. It has since been transmitted on a relatively obscure Channel 4 programme, *The Word*, which starts at 11pm.

By then the publicity from the American ban on the video and the IBA's dithering in Britain had achieved what the managers of Madonna's career had sought — public puritance about a tasteless video of clumsy erotic writhings in black underwear, all to spice up a song of utter banality.

The second decision, not to show the Christmas drink-drive campaign commercial before 9pm, raises more serious issues. Just as pornography is largely a matter of taste, so is "shock value". The objection to the recent RSCPA advertisement of a dead pony, as *The Times* pointed out at the time, was not the impact of the image but that the impact was based on a misleading reconstruction.

Allowing for dramatic licence, the drink-drive commercial is not inaccurate. It shows a small girl in close-up, reacting with increasing distress to the words of her mother, out of shot, who is berating her husband for killing a child while driving under the influence of drink. The link between the living child and the dead one is obvious, effective, moving and real, though hardly shocking. It passes the test of relevance to the public interest, which the Madonna video does not.

Custodians of television output have a more onerous task than newspaper editors in matters

of public taste. A newspaper can be read selectively, whereas television is a fixture in almost every home, exposed to most age groups. Television commercials and videos are beyond home censorship — before the viewer can reach for the switch they are over.

Nobody in modern Britain favours drunk driving. Nobody would dispute that a campaign to prevent it needs forcibly to invade the public consciousness, against competition from commercials for chocolate bars and electric razors. The reduction of a substantial public evil is worth the risk of offence to a few feelings, especially since the alcohol industry is still permitted to peddle its wares to a young audience, most blatantly in cinemas.

The drink-drive television campaign has already been weakened by the decision to announce that the commercial is aimed at men aged 35 to 50. Drink-drive campaigns should be aimed at anybody who drinks and anyone who drives. This includes teenagers, given the number of late night joyrides in stolen cars which germinate in public houses and terminate in tragedy.

The BBC and the IBA have had to make judgments on behalf of the viewer. The Madonna controversy was a "heads we win, tails you lose" exercise in cynical exploitation: either the video is shown as titillation to make money, or it is banned and becomes a publicity stunt, also to make money. ITV has handed Madonna double publicity by talking of banning the wretched thing, and then showing it. The drink-drive video did not need publicity for its timing, it needed timing for maximum publicity. The public can be trusted to know the difference and react accordingly.

Keeping armed forces up to scratch

From Field Marshal Lord Bramall
Sir, Having just visited, with a parliamentary delegation, our forces in the Gulf, I came back even more amazed than the Prime Minister, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, could have declared with such conviction, in the House of Commons debate on the Queen's Speech (report, November 9), that we can now "safely" cut our defence expenditure by 6 per cent in real terms over the next two to three years.

Of course, the decline of any foreseeable threat from the now defunct Warsaw Pact will allow some manpower and equipment savings to be made in Germany itself, but with the Soviet Union possibly on the brink of internal collapse he is a bold man who can be certain of how the strategic balance in Eastern Europe is going to work out. So we ought to keep some flexibility there.

Moreover, to achieve Mr Major's figure, in the time-scale he proposes, must pre-suppose the complete and early implementation of *Options for Change* — the Government's euphemism for its defence review. This, we have been told, would involve very considerable manpower reductions in all three services, and how a responsible government can contemplate that just when we are on the brink of possible war in the Gulf, the consequences and repercussions of which are as yet quite incalculable, is difficult to fathom.

The deployment of but one armoured brigade in Saudi Arabia seems to have necessitated the sending of 12,000 men to ensure its proper sustenance and support and must have involved the virtual grounding of the rest of the British Army of the Rhine in terms of spare parts and logistic backing, and of course still more troops are now being sent, bringing the total up to over 30,000 men with similar repercussions right across the board.

When you add all this to other still ongoing commitments, particularly in Northern Ireland where force levels have again had to be increased, it is obvious that expensive manpower will be at a premium until the Gulf crisis is resolved and perhaps beyond.

The Ministry of Defence will be wanting to do all it can to support our servicemen in the Gulf and to react to the changing needs of a highly volatile and potentially explosive situation; and of course events may just calm down all round. But the real danger of the then Chancellor's emphatic assertion is that by now his figures will have already been incorporated by the Treasury into its short and medium-term costings, whether *Options for Change* can be safely implemented, or because of the Gulf, need to be significantly modified. This will have further accentuated in every department the existing gap between now and the inevitable commitments and the resources to meet them.

So instead of genuine options for change which could be assessed and decided upon in the light of all the current circumstances, the Ministry of Defence is likely to be confronted with few if any options at all, other than an increasingly resource-led scramble to remove, in the shorter term, any accessible items which will help keep within the new arbitrary ceiling.

This will entail the cutting of things which are still needed and whose absence we will later regret, or "salami slicing" and moratoriums on spare parts, ammunition and training, which are equally dangerous, particularly if you may shortly have to fight. It could be a sad ending to what started as a prudent and rational exercise.

Surely the only answer is, while continuing to plan on sensible options for change, to suspend any "peace dividend" which should eventually accrue from them until the situation in the Middle East is clearer, and particularly to restore an adequate short-term cash flow. Otherwise we risk damaging, perhaps irreparably, the effectiveness of our armed forces just at a moment when we may have to depend on their heart, soul and professionalism to see us through.

Yours etc,
BRAMALL,
House of Lords,
December 4.

Monet crush
From Mr Robin Howard
Sir, You state (picture caption, December 4) that by its close next Sunday 500,000 people will have seen the Monet exhibition at the Royal Academy. This is open to doubt. Half a million people may have paid to visit the exhibition but how many succeeded in seeing it is quite another matter.

The organisation of this exhibition has been disgraceful. My wife and I paid in advance so at least we were spared having to queue outside in the cold for hours on end, but we were not able to see more than two or three of the paintings and these only in conditions of extreme discomfort. Herded together like animals, we were propelled along by the force of numbers, all jostled together, in one direction only, in a stifling atmosphere which permitted just the occasional fleeting glimpse of frame and canvas. Escape was not easy, but once achieved turned out to be permanent because re-entry was not allowed. Refuge in either the restaurant or the coffee room was equally impossible such were the length of the queues in both.

The Royal Academy may have made a lot of money out of this event but it has rendered a signal disservice to the cause of art appreciation in this country. Many people may have been visiting an art gallery for the first time. They are unlikely to feel inclined to repeat the experience.

Yours faithfully,
R. A. HOWARD,
New Timbers, 8 Upfield,
Croydon, Surrey,
December 5.

School differences
From Dr John Marks
Sir, The European Parliamentary Labour Party's advertisement, headed "If a British third-former went to Germany, he'd be in a different class" (December 3), is well wide of the mark. If a British third-former went to school in Germany, he'd be in a different class.

Germany has kept the selective system of secondary schools — re-established with British advice after World War Two. But in Britain, technical schools and most of our grammar schools were casualties of the comprehensive revolution.

Perhaps it is time for us to rethink. Yours faithfully,
JOHN MARKS,
2 Melbury Road,
Harrow, Middlesex,
December 4.

Woman's Hour
From Mr Peter Sewell
Sir, Your editorial ("Change in the air", December 1) denounced the BBC's proposal to chop *Woman's Hour*. I say good riddance.

Many years ago *Woman's Hour* was a bright, interesting and entertaining programme, even for male listeners. It dealt in a professional way with matters of practical interest to ordinary people, like how to make a Dundee cake.

Its technical decline began when it was apparently taken over by producers who considered such subjects far too trivial. What the female public needs to be told about, they decided, were important issues such as AIDS, Third World hunger, abortion, female orgasms, etc. The result is a drab, depressing programme which is

being taken off the air as quickly as possible. Yours faithfully,
P. R. SEWELL,
1 Victoria Terrace,
Prince Alfred Road, Liverpool 15,
December 7.

Wooden spoons
From Mr John Durkin
Sir, As the season of good will draws high perhaps *In Place of Strife* would be an appropriate prize (letter, December 5) for Conservative associations at their "Christmas Fayes".

Yours etc,
JOHN DURKIN,
15 Chilton Place,
Widmore Grove,
Trowbridge, Wiltshire,
December 9.

Woman's Hour
From Mrs Rita Rockborough Smith
Sir, Booking prize for a Conservative social event perhaps an old-fashioned idea.

Yours faithfully,
ROSALIND C. BARKNESS,
8 Grandison Drive,
Osney St Mary, Devon,
December 9.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Careers for architects put at risk

From Professor Trevor Dannatt, RA, and others

Sir, As architects members of the Royal Academy, committed to practice and to teaching, we believe that the DES proposals to cut architectural courses in universities and polytechnics to four years (report, Education, November 26), would be a retrograde step. It represents a short-term accountancy view, based on the assumption that less education and more training are required, and it is not in the best interests of architectural design. Building standards or the quality of our cities.

In Britain there is no teaching of architecture at secondary education level: students enter courses with no A-level work on which to build, and a first year is virtually regarded as introductory. Three years are required to teach principles and a grounding in technological issues.

Subsequently, in their fourth academic year, when they consolidate their learning and experience, their speculative and critical faculties are weakened. Only in their fifth year do they display maturity in handling issues, from building detail to site context. Architectural practices cannot provide the educational consolidation which will be lost by condensing of the fourth and fifth years.

Full-time education of at least five years is the European norm and has been recommended by an EC advisory committee. We endorse this recommendation and believe that the present three-plus-two years is right. We support the RIBA and the Architects' Registration Council in their stand in this matter and ask the DES to think again.

Yours truly,
TREVOR DANNATT,
E. T. CADBURY-BROWN,
HUGH CASSON,
THEO CROSBY,
EDWARD CULLINAN,
PHILIP DOWSON,
NORMAN FOSTER,
PAUL KORALEK,
LEONARD MANASSEH,
JOHN PARTRIDGE,
PHILIP POWELL,
RICHARD ROGERS,
COLIN SCHOENWILSON,
JAMES STIRLING,
Royal Academy of Arts,
Piccadilly, W1,
November 30.

Tribute to Ingham
From Mr Trevor Kavanagh
Sir, The vast majority of the 226 accredited parliamentary lobby journalists at Westminster will agree with the warm sentiments expressed by Baron Oakley towards Bernard Ingham (article, December 3).

Very few of us recognise the image of Mrs Thatcher's former chief press secretary as the manipulative character portrayed by Robin Harris in his book, *Gold and Faithful Servant*. But sadly, there is a danger that this version will enter the record as a definitive account of Mr Ingham's 11 years as "sources close to the Prime Minister".

I believe it is important to understand that Mr Ingham's first wife was the Prime Minister and not the media. That was certainly the basis on which we treated his briefings. There were times when he could not in all conscience tell us the whole truth. But I believe I speak for my colleagues when I say that he was unfailingly straight, honest and fair.

More senior members of the lobby with experience of earlier Downing Street press secretaries rate him as the best.

Yours sincerely,
TREVOR KAVANAGH,
Lobby Journalists,
Press Gallery,
House of Commons,
December 6.

Aid for Soviet Union
From Dr David Le Vay
Sir, When the West spent the Russians into the ground on armaments, it was this convincing demonstration that only capitalism can afford guns and butter that finally broke the hold of communism in Eastern Europe and in Russia itself.

The Soviet Union is now disorganised and patchily hungry, though far from starving. This could be relieved by a diversion of military allocations, but these are being maintained, or even increased, according to *Levaya* (report, December 6) while calls are made on Western charity. For the Russians this is an eminently satisfactory arrangement: they supply the guns and we provide the butter.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID LE VAY,
6 Cranston High Street,
Barnsley, East Sussex,
December 6.

Lotteries dilemma
From Dr E. Moran
Sir, The leading article, "Want a bet?" (December 3) is full of dubious assertions, in particular the argument against large lotteries is not only a moral one. The many practical objections to major lotteries were clearly set out by Earl Ferrers, the government spokesman, during the debate in the House of Lords on February 28 this year. These include: the inevitable public promotion would be against the accepted policy that available gambling should only meet unmet demand; the difficulty of choosing between many worthwhile causes vying for assistance; the danger of criminal infiltration; the likelihood that small charitable lotteries would not survive the competition.

It could, however, be seen as a matter of some moral concern if the only new worthy projects in this country could be financed were by an extension of legalised gambling.

Yours faithfully,
E. MORAN (Chairman),
The National Council on Gambling,
26 Bedford Square, WC1,
December 6.

Woman's Hour
From Mrs Rita Rockborough Smith
Sir, Booking prize for a Conservative social event perhaps an old-fashioned idea.

Yours faithfully,
ROSALIND C. BARKNESS,
8 Grandison Drive,
Osney St Mary, Devon,
December 9.

كتاب النظم

Originals: Jeremy Atkinson, clogmaker.



Toehold: Jeremy Atkinson is opening up a new market in wooden clogs

As did those feet in ancient times

JEREMY Atkinson introduces himself as Jerry the Clog. He says he is the last of Britain's master cloggers, although he finds plenty of customers for his made-to-measure wood and leather clogs at about £70 a pair.

Clogs date back to Roman times. In Britain they denoted class, and were worn by the gentry while their workers lived and died in them. Now they are experiencing a renaissance. Mr Atkinson says, and adds: "I sell clogs to the salaried classes, not people on wages." One of his customers is an anaesthetist, another a social worker. He also shoes traditional clog dancers.

Mr Atkinson says clogs should not be confused with the Little Dutch Girl wooden shoe, more correctly called a sabot, and also traditionally worn by Belgian and French peasants. True clogs are composites of wood and leather. Because wood is a poor medium for transferring heat, they are cool to wear in summer, warm in winter.

Mr Atkinson says he is the only clogmaker in Britain both hand-carving wood for the soles and hand-stitching the leather uppers. Most clogmakers prefer to buy in one or the other.

He started in the craft after taking a teacher training course, which coincided with a glut of teachers, and served an apprenticeship with a clogmaker in South Wales. It is ironic that he set up in Hereford, a county with some of the heaviest clay soil, which can be death to clogs. "Clogged up with clay or snow, clogs are no good," he says. Traditional British clogs feature a variety of profiles that include a "duck beak" front, "common rounds" and "square

toes", which were tipped with metal because they were worn mainly by miners. In the old days, clog irons - metal treads - were usually fixed to the sole of the shoe, but Mr Atkinson fits them only by request, soiling his clogs with an easily replaceable version of crows.

He prefers to use sycamore, crafting the clogs from tree felling to foot. He says: "Sycamore is the hardest wood that is the easiest to carve." Other clog factories use beech, which Mr Atkinson does not favour because of its short grain which, he says, is prone to splitting. Clogs need to be made from wood which dries easily and evenly and will not rot.

For the uppers, he uses cowhide or, even better, water buffalo hide imported from India which, although more expensive, keeps its shape longer. First, he makes a paper template of a client's foot, matching its shape to wood worked from freshly hewn logs. The fit is checked again, and then the carved soles are left to dry for up to three weeks.

When shaping the clogs, he uses a block knife, resembling a butcher's cleaver, for rough carving, and a hollow, which has a blade shaped like a broad comb. A rebate knife or V-gouge is used for the ledge of the clog, and a saw to cut the step of the heel.

Handstitched leather uppers are fitted with brass-headed welt laces. The uppers may also be decorated, then coloured and given a range of fastenings including clasps, straps and laces.

SANDY BISP

© Jeremy Atkinson's clogs are sold at Capuchin Yard, Church Street, Hereford.

Home from home: Joanna van Heyningen and Birkin Haward

Going to get away from work in an egg

In a village near Oxford, just down from the church and along from the pub, amid a cluster of old stone houses, stands a 17th century barn. From the outside it appears unremarkable, which is a source of satisfaction for its owners, a husband and wife team of architects.

Joanna van Heyningen and Birkin Haward work together from their London home, which is very modern but, Ms van Heyningen says, "respects the other houses in the street, mediating between Victorian and the Sixties."

This emphasis on architectural respect is the key to the conversion of their barn at North Hinksey. It retains its stone exterior under a Welsh slate roof, but inside it is almost entirely open plan, light, white and spacious. "Like living in an egg," Mr Haward says.

"People complain about architects who produce the latest in modern design while living in gentrified terraces," he adds. "This is partly true: there is an inertia and a loss of faith. And in

'People complain about architects who live in gentrified terraces'

Britain the planners are about as deeply depressing as they have ever been. There is more conceptual freedom abroad."

Their two young children adore the "egg". They would prefer to live here all the time. Their room is the only conventional one in the house. Once the grain store, it is reached by white metal steps, balustraded with rails and mesh, like a ship's stair. "From here," says Bruno Haward, aged 13, "you can see the river when it's flooded right up to where the horses are."

"The country is much better," says Mellis Haward, aged eight. "London is rather smelly, you know."

A similar staircase opposite the children's steps leads up to the gallery. This is the parents' bedroom, study and sewing room. A workbench runs the length of the gallery wall; you can lean across it and look over into the well of the main room.

Halfway down the side of the main room stands a woodburning stove, the wall behind it hung with posters, paintings, photographs, maps and working drawings. High at the top of the room are the



The architects' dream of country living: galleried bedroom, plastered stone walls and a wood-burning stove

exposed roof trusses. The effect is one of immense airiness, but also warmth. Making the house warm and dry were priorities. It is heated by underfloor plastic hot water pipes, fed by a small boiler. "We had to make an agonising decision over whether or not to keep the inside stone exposed," Mr Haward says, "but we opted for insulation and plastering, not only for lightness but also because stone creates dirt and dust and is

difficult to keep warm, particularly in a weekend house; you don't want to spend the entire time heating it up, only to get it to the right temperature as you are about to leave."

Light floods the main room and provides a view to the rear garden's espaliered apple trees and old Bourbon roses climbing the low stone wall at the end. The Seacourt, a tributary of the Thames, runs behind the wall. The main windows in the living area are the only outside gateway to the conversion. They comprise sections of glass, fronted by a "yashmak": a screen of timber crosspieces which are hinged to allow window cleaning. "The builders thought we were mad," Mr Haward says. "People often put patio windows in old barn entrances and wreck the look."

The barn is L-shaped now; the

cartshed has been joined to the barn to create a loggia which gives the house an entrance lobby and a dumping ground for boots and bikes. The linking section also provided space for the boiler room and bathroom, "avoiding having to carve up the main space".

The barn stands in the grounds of what was once Ms van Heyningen's parents' house, an early 17th century farmhouse, where Mrs Haward was brought up. Her mother moved to Oxford, but is near enough to come over when the family arrive.

Charlie, Mr Haward's eldest daughter, is an interior designer. Buddy, his eldest son, is an architect, as was Mr Haward's father, Bruno, however, does not intend to be an architect. "Too many in the family," he says.

ELUNED PRICE

Breeding

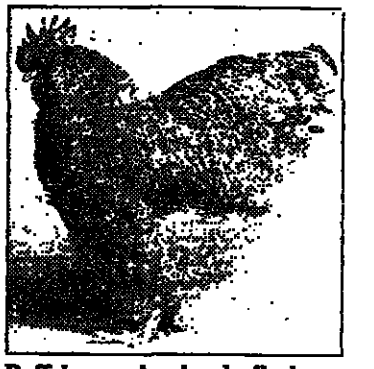
Steady the buffs

WHEN a flock of Buff Orpington chickens processed across Horse Guards' Parade to wish the Queen Mother a happy nineteenth birthday, one man looked on with particular pride. Will Burdett, Keeper of the Royal Buffs.

The breed is a favourite of the Queen Mother, and the Poultry Club celebrated its centenary 13 years ago by presenting their patron with three Buff Orpingtons. Mr Burdett has brought numbers up to around 20. This year the royal entry took the breed championship at the Great Yorkshire Show.

Mr Burdett says the Queen Mother's knowledge of the finer points of the big birds, with their characteristic marmalade glow, is second to none, and the welfare of the birds is the subject of much correspondence between their keeper and Sir Ralph Anstruther, the Queen Mother's treasurer.

As keeper, Mr Burdett is unpaid, but he says: "It's an honour to have the Queen Mother's birds in my care. They may not be cult figures, like the royal corgis, but



Buff hen: a hardy, docile layer

our royal connection has done wonders for the poultry fancier, getting rid of any cloth cap image."

He claims the Buff Orpington is a perfect bird for most keepers because of its placid yet hardy nature. The buff colour should permeate right through in a diluted shade to the underfeathers. Mr Burdett says. White underfeathering is not desirable, nor is any peeping on the backs or wings of the bird.

In the Twenties and Thirties Buff Orpingtons were popular table birds as well as good layers. They lay about 150 eggs a year, with excellent hatching and producing qualities. They cost up to £20 each and live for five to six years.

On the principle that nothing is too good for the royal buffs, they are fed on organic wheat and maize. Buff Orpingtons have their own club, separate from the one serving black, blue and white Orpingtons. Mr Burdett is chairman of both clubs. He has 200 birds at his home near Thirsk, north Yorkshire; some of the Queen Mother's birds are kept at Sandringham, Norfolk.

S.B.

© Further information from the Buff Orpington Club, Bryan's Bottom, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.

Feather report

Bitten by the bug of a thug

HARKEN unto the words of the prophet Zephaniah: "And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar work."

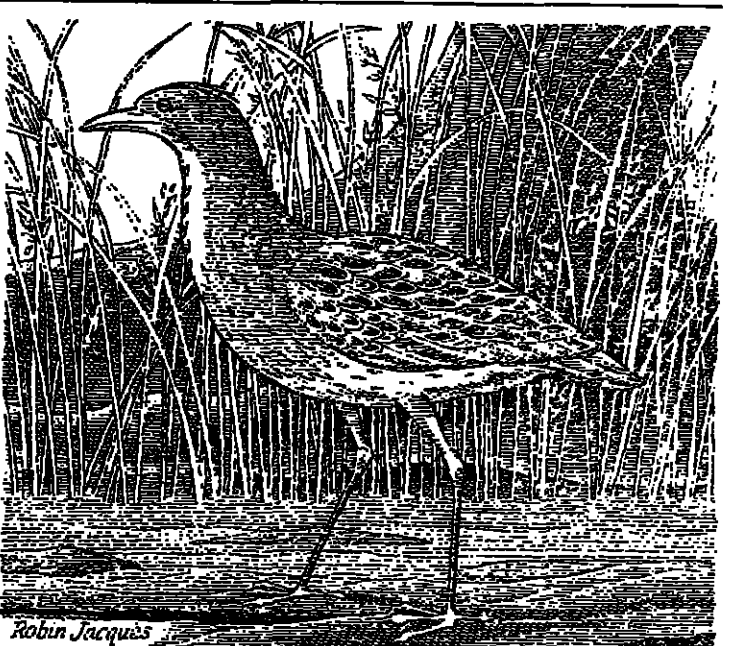
In subsequent translations, bittern is translated as hedgehog. I do not know how the hedgehog flew to the upper lintels, or what it sang, but clearly the bittern is as philologically obscure and weird as it is ornithologically.

The bittern has long been a bird of ill omen. It inhabits desolate marsh and its voice is - with the possible exception of that other bird of ill omen, the nightjar or corpse-hound - the spookiest sound in Britain. It is called booming, and is a male territorial proclamation. Few people have heard it: there were only 20 males booming in Britain this summer.

I have spent much of this year in desolate marshland, and have heard booming bitterns, lucky me. But I have not seen one. They are the most sneaky, devious, skulking of birds: they do not believe in being seen.

So here we have a bird that is rare, almost invisible and lives in the most desolate places. You could not design a bird that was harder to study.

Glenn Tyler is in the middle of two years' research on bitterns. He has spent most of the past year wandering about in a reedbed like a bittern himself. Bitterns are heron-like: long-necked and long-billed, and thought to be exclusively fish-eaters. He has done most of this research in the RSPB reserves in Leighton Moss, Lancashire, and at Minsmere, Suffolk. He has recorded booming males



Booming but declining: only 20 male bitterns were heard this summer

and compared their voice prints. Each bittern has a different voice: his research has shown that there are fewer of them than was thought.

As the birds are "invisible", he has kept track of them by radio. This involves attaching a transmitter to a bittern: not an easy task. The transmitters last for nine months, after which the batteries fail. Later the leather strap rots away and leaves the bird unencumbered.

How do you catch a bittern? Mr Tyler caught Percy, his most significant subject, with a rugby tackle. He was hanging about in the reeds recording a booming male when the bird approached him, and did not fly off.

Mr Tyler's sudden assault was courageous: bitterns have spear-like bills and go for the attractive shining target of the eye. The bird promptly vomited all over him: five eels, a water vole, a moorhen and a selection of caddis fly larvae. It says much for Mr Tyler's scientific detachment that he was genuinely fascinated by this evidence of their dietary inclinations, even as, stinking like Zephaniah's nightmare, he lifted the bird from the reeds and bore it away.

After attaching the radio to its back, the bittern was back in the reeds and booming within 20

minutes, and it has provided fascinating information ever since.

In his first season, Mr Tyler has collected data that he trusts will be confirmed by the second. The birds are basically solitary and the males hold enormous territories: nearly 100 acres of reeds. They need a lot of room. They do not interact much, hence the need for the enormous, low-frequency, long-carrying voice to proclaim the territory and attract females.

The male bitterns are polygamous, and after mating they have nothing to do with nest-building and chick-rearing. They are also given to the rage of females in adjoining territories.

Mr Tyler is not purely in the business of advancement of knowledge. His aim after two years will be to write a management plan for bitterns: why they have declined, and what can be done to stop it. The wardens of reedbed reserves will then try to implement his suggestions.

Life is tough for bitterns. Making a living in reedbeds is a poor option in a country that is recent years has been mad on draining fields, but so long as there are people like Mr Tyler about, there is hope for bitterns - and for people as well.

SIMON BARNES

UPTO 75% OFF
LOWER OVERHEADS...
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Anglo-Saxon attitudes: Margaret Dobson and her 250-room castle in Brancepeth, Durham, encapsulate the mood of Arthur Mee's early motorists' guides to the English counties

England still belongs to Mee

First compiled more than 50 years ago, a series of classic county travel guides is finding a new audience. Peter Davenport reports

When Arthur Mee began publishing his series of detailed guides to the English counties more than 50 years ago they were hailed as "the indispensable companion of the motor age", opening up the byways to the inquisitiveness of the first generation to use cars for leisure.

Reviewers were fulsome in their praise of the novel-length books. One described them as "the sort of ecstatic inventory Macaulay used to take", and another welcomed them as relief from "the chattering urbanity of most literary pilgrims through the country".

The King's England series, as the set of 41 books was called, has long been out of print, available only through the collectors' grapevine or occasionally at antiquarian book sales, and even then only at a premium. Now, thanks to the efforts of Steve Rudd and Jane Ellison, local history and publishing enthusiasts, the entire series is being reprinted.

Three of Mee's guides - to his native Nottinghamshire and neighbouring Derbyshire, as well as the most recent, on Durham - are in the bookshops, and have stimulated a demand which has all but overwhelmed Mr Rudd and Ms Ellison, who operate from a former mine worker's house in the village of Carlton, near Barnsley in south Yorkshire.

Original copies of the guide to Durham, first published in 1953 - several years after the author's death - fetch up to £85 at collectors' fairs, but the new, 207-page hardback edition, published last month, containing maps and the 70 original black and white plates, costs £11.95.

Mr Rudd, aged 35, and Ms Ellison, aged 27 and latterly employed as the bass player in a country and western band, set up King's England Press last August to publish the Arthur Mee series, under licence from Hodder & Stoughton, the original publisher. The books, faithful reproductions of the originals, are produced by a firm of printers at Oley, West Yorkshire. Ms Ellison is employed by the company full-time, but Mr Rudd works with a direct marketing company while King's England Press gets off the ground.

The success of the series - Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire have already sold more than 1,000

copies each and Durham is going faster than either of them - has meant long nights packing copies and thousands of miles on the road delivering to bookshops and exhibiting to the trade.

"Our biggest problem," Mr Ellison says, "is that there are simply not enough hours in the day or enough money to produce the books as quickly as people want them." Originally, the couple intended to produce the entire series over a ten-year period but, because of the high level of interest and demand, they now hope to do it within half that time.

The information for the series was gathered by Mee and his researchers during the Thirties and Forties.

In *Enchanted Land*, first pub-

lished in 1936 to introduce the King's England series, Mee wrote: "It has been a wonderful journey, this new exploration of England, and we must have seen a hundred thousand lovely things in our half million miles. We made up our minds to put down nothing but if we could help it, but to be recording angels, and this is the story of what we have seen in this Enchanted Land."

To ask why anybody would want to buy a guidebook that is half a century out of date is to miss the point. The distinguishing features of all of Mee's guides are the attention to detail, the stockpiling, as it were, of page after page of anecdote and local lore, with the journalist's eye for description and an unerring sense of place.

Today, of course, much of what is described has changed. Villages

have sprawled, town centres been redeveloped, and even the face of the countryside itself has changed, altered by modern farming techniques and scarred by bigger and wider roads. It is no small irony that the demands of the ever increasing army of car owners, the very people to whom the books were initially meant to appeal, have been pre-eminent in forcing many of these changes.

The appeal today, apart from the pleasure of such well-researched writing, is the opportunity the books offer to measure how the cities, towns and villages, as well as the countryside, have changed. With a Mee book in the car, it is easy to mark the progress, if that is the word, of change.

Take Durham, for example. Mee describes the county, which has changed in shape with much of its former area now in Tyne and Wear, as a "vast workshop", having a "vast coalfield and an ancient cathedral" as its outstanding features. The cathedral is still there, but the coalfield, which once employed 150,000 men in 150 collieries, has shrunk to a handful of pits. Once, 10,000 men laboured in large steelworks and another 8,000 built railways, engines and rolling stock, but today none of these is produced in the county. Vast areas of industrial wasteland have been reclaimed and returned to countryside and the county is once again mainly rural.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Consett, perched on a hillside in the northern Pennines above the River Derwent. Mee wrote that "its tall chimneys, rising from a long grey mountain of slag, form a feature of the skyline visible for miles", adding that the large steelworks had had a great reputation for more than a century. Ten years ago, the steelworks shut down, throwing 4,700 men out of work and, in the subsequent regeneration of Consett, the 700-acre steelworks site has been turned to rolling green hills in the largest land reclamation scheme ever undertaken in Europe, costing £12 million.

Following Mee's directions today can still bring the traveller upon the unexpected human

one of the tiny nearby cottages, in fact, the owner of the 250-room castle. She and her late husband, Dennis, bought it in 1978 for less than £50,000 to use as a base for their book publishing company when rising prices drove them from London.

Mr Dobson died before they moved in, but his widow and seven children went ahead anyway. The publishing business stopped five years ago, but Mrs Dobson lives there still, trying to keep a few rooms warm without central heating, and battling to keep the rain out of the rest.

Mrs Dobson is an example of the British character who would surely have been mentioned in Mee's pages had he been writing today.

The King's England series is published by King's England Press, 37 Crookes Lane, Carlton, near Barnsley, South Yorkshire (0226 72393).

Farmer's diary: Paul Heiney

Killing them with kindness

THIS week we killed two pigs, which was distressing, but not for the reasons you might imagine. What started as a brush with the 19th century ended up as a head-on crash with the confused values of the late 20th.

The story began last Thursday morning. I always ask for neighbourly help when pigs have to be marshalled: capturing agile swine calls for a man of dogged determination, instinctive stockmanship and an ability to curb his tongue in front of the children. I have none of these qualities, and Richard, my neighbour, has. By chance we also had a sculptor staying with us who claimed to have wide experience of pig-handling, having spent time in the peasant cultures of mid-France. I was more interested in the muscle which years of chisel-

and sausages. The killing of the pig was always a great occasion in the small farmer's economy, with the whole family turning out to help: what had been a grunting, well-fed friend by the back door would shortly become their guarantee of food throughout the winter. I have read lurid accounts of the slaughter, of weeping children holding jugs to catch the blood, of bladders being excised and used to hold the lard. I was happy to delegate all these tasks to the abattoir.

While the pigs' attention was diverted, we seized our chance and snapped shut the hurdles. We were half-way there. Recalling his Gallic adventures, the sculptor suggested we put their heads in the bucket of meal and, by applying gentle pressure, back them into the trailer. Minutes later we were bound for the butcher, five miles away. The slaughter house lies hidden behind the white-washed facade of a Suffolk village. The beasts are killed by the son of the vicar, who spares time to advise and sympathise with first-timers like me. More importantly, animals get kind attention, too. There is no stressful overcrowding in undersized pens: animals are killed within a couple of hours of being delivered. It is as far removed from an insensitive factory atmosphere as you could wish to get. So why, and here the 20th century intrudes, will the institution probably be forced to close? It is to do with 1992, when the whole of Europe will break into blandness. The rules that apply in Naples will be the same as those in Norwich: abattoirs that kill 100 animals a week will be wrapped in the same bureaucracy as those that kill 1,000. But rules made to govern a steelworks would never work if applied to a blacksmith's forge, and neither will the rules of mass meat production ever allow small men, like my butcher, to survive.

The argument is long, but I know of no more sympathetic or stress-free end to a couple of pigs' lives than the one enacted last Thursday. Is there any chance that somewhere in the vastness of a united Europe there will be room for the concerned farmer who wants a civilised end to his animals' lives? Is there the remotest possibility that the small and caring may ever be valued as highly as the mighty and efficient? Pigs might fly.



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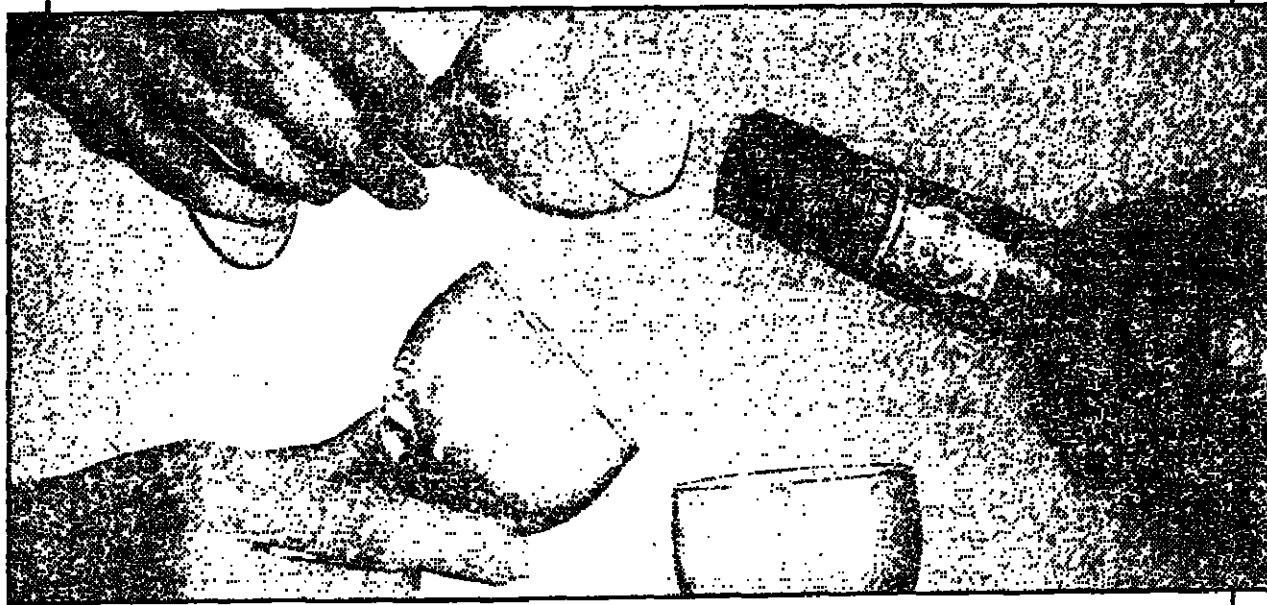
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Men used to ask the ladies to leave when Croft Port appeared.

Today they wouldn't have the bottle.



In a less emancipated age, the end of dinner was reserved for "man's talk." As was Croft Port. Today, however, when the Late Bottled Vintage or our 10 and 20 Year Old Tawnies come out, the ladies stay put. And the gentlemen find that when it comes to Croft Port, liberation can be a struggle.



Country events

THIS WEEKEND

● Twelve days of Christmas: Christmas concert with refreshments. Also today, tomorrow in stable block, stalls selling hand-made items. *Berningborough Hall, Shipton-by-Berningborough, North Yorkshire (0804 470666). Concert tonight, 7.30pm. Tickets £5. Craft fairs, today, tomorrow 12 noon-5pm.*

● Grassington Dickensian Christmas: Villagers in Victorian dress, bands, dancing, barrel organ, buskers. *Grassington, near Shipton, North Yorkshire. Today and every Sat until Christmas, 11am-6pm.*

● Birdoswald Roman Fort: A four-mile two-hour tour of the Roman fort and civilian settlement with the warden. *Meet at Birdoswald Visitors' Centre, East Cumbria (ref: NY615663) tomorrow 1.30pm. Adult £1, child 50p. Wear strong shoes and warm clothing.*

● Avebury Food and Craft Fair: Seasonal craft items and food for sale in historic setting. *Great Barn, Avebury, near Marlborough, Wiltshire. Today, tomorrow (06723 555).*

● Craft in Action: Demonstrations, craft items and

charity Christmas cards for sale. Father Christmas, musical entertainment, carriage rides. *Dunham Massey Hall, near Altrincham, Cheshire. Today, tomorrow 10am-4pm. Free.*

● The Art of Lego: Major exhibition shows influence of Lego brick. Lego workshop in which to create your own design. *Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, Cheshire (0625 527458). Today until Feb 28. Adult £2, child £1.*

● Christmas at Tatton: State rooms decorated as for a Victorian Christmas. At Park Farm, nativity scene, hot chestnuts, carol singers, handbell ringers. *Tatton House and Park, Tatton, Knutsford, Cheshire (0565 54822). Mansion open this weekend until December 14, 15 and 17: 1-4pm. Adult £1.50, child 5 to 15, 75p, car park £1.30. Farm today, tomorrow December 15, 16, 12 noon-3pm. Admission £1.20 for child includes small present.*

● Dickensian Christmas: Costumed shopkeepers, street entertainers, Father Christmas, refreshments, competitions. *Rochester, Kent. Today, tomorrow, during shopping hours.*

● Christmas Tree: Carols, folk stories and dancing, craft demonstrations, gifts for sale. *Welsh Folk Museum, St*

Fagans, Cardiff. Thursday and Friday evenings until 10pm.

● Lincoln Christmas Market: Anglo-German event (Lincoln is twinned with Neustadt) with more than 100 stalls selling gifts, food, drink, crafts, carols, choirs, handbell ringers. *Lincoln, between castle and cathedral. Thursday, Friday 8-9.30pm, Saturday, Sunday 12 noon-9.30pm.*

● Peterborough Christmas Concerts: St Peter's Singers with carols, mince pies and punch. *Town Hall, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. Thursday 7.30pm. Tickets £4.50 (0733 63141).*

● Christmas at Shugborough: Candlelit mansion house, carol singing, Father Christmas, game pies and spiced punch. *Shugborough, near Stafford (0889 881 388). Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 4-9pm. Adult £3, child £1.50, car park free.*

● Music at Rufford: Feast of Christmas with Southport Bach Society. Admission includes glass of wine. *Old Hall, Rufford, Lancashire. Friday, Saturday 7.30pm. Tickets £5.50 (0704 821254).*

● Winter at Snape: Ten concerts to celebrate Christmas and New Year. *Snape Maltings Concert Hall, Aldborough, Suffolk. Friday until Jan 5 (0728 452935).*

JUDY FROSHAUG

Changing face: Chester

On the magic roundabout

BARRY GREENWOOD



No keystone left untarnished: Colin Stananought (left) and David Ross

THE important point about the new Grosvenor Court buildings in Chester is not just that everyone likes them, but that they have been built on a windswept traffic island where for 20 years all others failed to design a development anyone wanted to build (including Sir Basil Spence).

Colin Stananought's buildings are all in red brick, some Georgian in style, some in the manner of Chester's greatest Victorian architect, John Douglas, who made the city the embodiment of the Romantic movement. They brilliantly complete and enclose the magnificent mile-long vista along Foregate, Eastgate and Watergate streets, Chester's principal thoroughfare. This is one of the best architectural treats in the British Isles, with an unparalleled run of richly carved black and white frontages.

As you drive into Chester from Nantwich you are no longer conscious of the hurrying traffic of the inner ring road. "This was the dog end of town," says David Ross, Mr Stananought's partner. "Since Grosvenor Court was completed, the values of surrounding buildings have increased sharply."

"We put the access road in over an existing sewer that we couldn't build on," he says. Inside, the new street, complete with stone cobbles, has the feeling of the lanes of London.

The pair have also been asked to extend an original Douglas building on the edge of the roundabout, healing another dreadful gap left by the traffic engineers. The reason for their success is not

difficult to see. Like their forebears, their neo-Georgian buildings have pedimented front doors, sash windows and keystones, with individual staircases inside, though they can be linked internally if a business occupies more than one. The real challenge was to make an impact at the corners. Their solution was to design big, emphatic gabled buildings with "a touch of old Nuremberg" in the steep. Mr Stananought says: "We needed to emphasise these corners, so we put in stripes of darker tiles on the roofs."

Strong use is made of the diapering, a criss-cross pattern overlaid in dark brick and continued in a band around the top storey. Two types of artificial stone, beige and brown, provide variety for window surrounds, cornerstones and drip courses. Mr Ross says: "Artificial stone is half the price of real stone, and if details are repeated the cost comes down still further."

Mr Stananought is responsible for a second development nearby, of a Fifteen water board building, this time with the Grosvenor Estate, a big Chester property owner. The new buildings in Vicar's Lane further refine the Douglas style with overhanging eaves, complete with barge boards and sprockets (brackets supporting the underside of the roof). The brickwork is even more ingenious, with stepped gables and indentations, all confirming that with care a speculative office block can fit into and enrich a historic street.

MARCUS BINNEY

Help: Philip Blake-Jones, opera parties

What wine with the Verdi?

ANDREW BOURNE



Harmonious supper: after the main course and before the pudding, Cheryl Barker and Bruce Rankin perform extracts from Verdi's La traviata

One evening last week, guests arrived at a large terrace house in central London for an unusual dinner party. After the first two courses they descended to the candlelit basement to watch Alfredo and Violetta fall in love, and then listened to Verdi's heart-breaking score as she drew her last breath in his arms — all just a few feet from where they were sitting.

These extracts from *La traviata*, rearranged into a mini opera, were the work of Philip Blake-Jones. He is the brains behind Opera Interludes, a company which tailors opera to the tastes and home of individuals, lasting for as long or as short a time as they see fit. "It makes opera so much more accessible," he says.

Mr Blake-Jones was brought up in Lancaster, and started singing lessons with Barbara Robotham at Lancaster university while he was still at school. Later he studied singing and the piano at the Royal Academy of Music in London, before joining the chorus at Glyndebourne. His break came when the baritone who was singing El Dancario in Bizet's *Carmen* sprained his ankle, and he was asked to go on in his place.

After two years he left and sang with Opera East before joining Pavilion Opera, a company which performs mainly in country houses.

Later he discovered he had a taste for management, and last February branched out on his own. His first commission fitted exactly the aims of his company, and set the standard for everything that has followed. He gave a performance of *Così fan tutte* in an exquisite garden in Surrey which included a rotunda and a pond. The guests were seated in a marquee, but the singers performed in the open where "a natural fluke provided good acoustics".

Most performances last between 30 minutes and an hour, and Opera Interludes offers, among other things, *Carmen*, *La traviata*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*, as excerpts or in their entirety.

So far, patrons have included companies as well as private hosts. Prices range from £400 for two singers and a piano accompaniment to £3,000 for a full opera. A specially commissioned performance would cost from £5,000.

A different cast is booked for each occasion. "There is a lot of talent around and not enough work," Mr Blake-Jones says. Cheryl Barker, who sang Violetta last week, understudies the role for the Glyndebourne Touring Opera, for which she also sings Marcellina in Beethoven's *Fidelio*. Bruce Rankin, who sang Alfredo, is a lead tenor with Pavilion Opera.

Performing so closely to an audience presents certain problems. Mr Blake-Jones insists that "the singers must look the part". Violetta must appear young and attractive and be dressed like an expensive courtesan, with jewellery which could be taken for real. Alfredo should look young enough to still be dependent on the bounty of a rich father.

After the performance, the guests return to their pudding and cheese, refreshed and entertained.

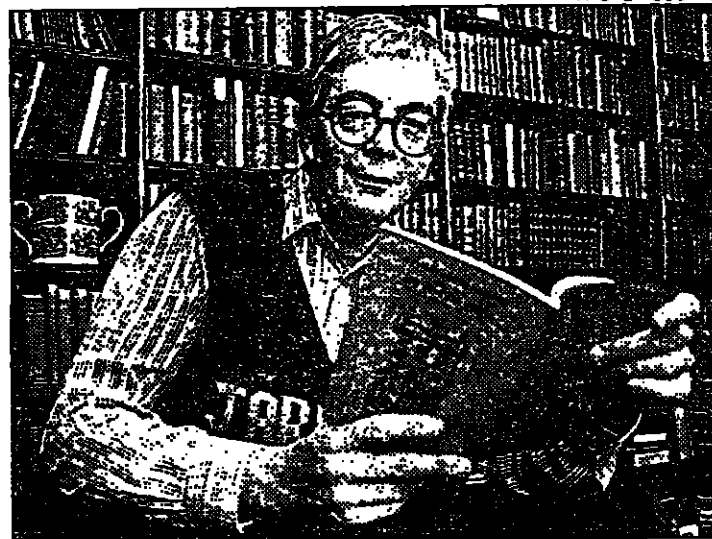
GERALDINE RANSON

Opera Interludes/Philip Blake-Jones, 071-266 2392.

Old curiosity shopping

Brian Lake specialises in old books by the writer who virtually invented Christmas

ANDREW BOURNE



Wise buy: Brian Lake says any edition of Dickens is a good investment

There is a bronze bas-relief of Charles Dickens on the wall of one of the cluster of antiquarian bookshops lining the narrow streets that converge on the British Museum in Bloomsbury, London. It is trimmed with tinsel in a seasonable tribute to the writer credited with having popularised the traditional Christmas.

Some people swear the bronze is that of Brahms or Marx, a mistake that could never happen round the corner at Jarndyce in Great Russell Street, where you will find more Dickensiana per square inch of shelf space than anywhere else.

Jarndyce is run by Brian Lake, a graduate of York University, and his wife, Janet Nassau. If you want to get into Mr Lake's good books, you will tell him that you recognise the huge framed print of *The Worship of Bacchus* on the wall as the work of George Cruikshank, one of Dickens's earliest illustrators, or that you have heard he can sell you a first edition Dickens for little more than the £19.95 you would pay for Peter Ackroyd's recently published Dickens biography.

A three-volume first edition of *Great Expectations*, bound in tan calf, will cost you £8,500, although you can drop that to £6,000 if you settle for an edition with forged title pages and printed on "slightly different paper".

The next most expensive item in the Dickens catalogue is a two-volume first edition of *Sketches by Boz*, with Cruikshank's signed illustrations. This will set you back £5,000. All this is mere petty cash, however, compared with what you would be asked to pay for *Great Expectations* in the original cloth binding. This is the rarest bird that can fall to the big guns of the Boz bibliophiles. It

could cost you anything between £25,000 and £50,000.

But what of the bargains? "My instinct," Mr Lake says, "is that the best bargains are the most expensive books." He believes, however, that any edition of Dickens is an investment, whether it is an early one of *A Christmas Carol*, which he will sell for £150, or a fine copy of the first edition

for which he would ask £5,000 — if he, or anyone else, could get one.

If you insist on trying to buy Dickens on the cheap, Mr Lake will sell you, for £60, a first edition of *The Chimes*, albeit a second issue, but bound in the same red cloth which Dickens used for the *Carol*, his first Christmas book. For £20 he will sell you a ninth edition of *The Chimes*, and there

is a first edition, first issue of *Cricket on the Hearth*, at £60.

If it is the better times you are after, what about a first edition of *Dombey and Son*, in half-black calf, and yours for £60? Or a first edition of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, yours for £30? Or an early cheap edition of *Nicholas Nickleby*, for an incredible £15?

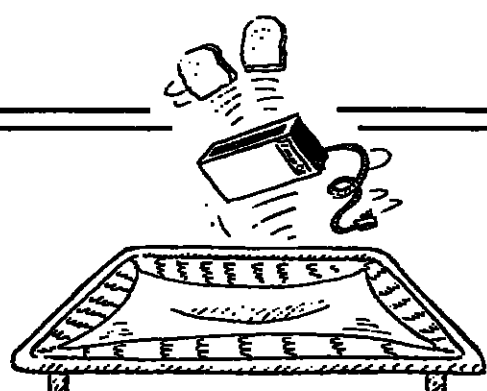
Or do you prefer something you can pick up and sing along to? For £25 you can get a copy of George Linley's little ballad (circa 1841) called *Little Nell*, inscribed to Dickens.

Dickens treasures are never more than an arm's length away at Jarndyce, but you will have to stretch a little further to reach the other, non-Dickensian gems. There are thousands of them, neatly stacked on shelves, or less neatly distributed in piles on the carpet. You would not expect some of them to be on sale here but available, for reference only, in the British Library across the road. There is, for example, William Hall's *Cornish British Vocabulary*, a holograph manuscript of more than 1,000 closely written pages, dated 1730 (catalogued at £15,500), and a first edition of Dr Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*, which is occupying much shelf space until someone meets the asking price of £5,500.

Of course, you could always do what I did: a jumble sale find of a little red book called *The Mudfog Papers*, which cost me 10p, turned out to be a rare edition of a collection of amusing pieces written by Dickens when he was editing the monthly magazine, *Bentley's Miscellany*. Mr Lake told me it was worth about £200.

PETER DAVALLE

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Events in town

THIS WEEKEND

● Christmas at Kew: Santa Claus and his reindeer in a Victorian grotto in the Princess of Wales Conservatory. Kew Gardens, Richmond, Surrey. Today, tomorrow and next weekend 10.30am-12.30pm and 1.30-3.30pm. Next Wednesday to Friday from 5-7pm. Admission £2. Admission to gardens, adults £3, child £1.

● Sportsman's Aid Christmas Fair: Visits from sporting celebrities, stalls, carol singers. The Piazza, Covent Garden, London WC2. Today 10am-6pm.

● Science Museum Film: A Drop in the Ocean, examining the many causes of pollution in the North Sea. The film is suitable for children of school age and their parents.

Science Museum, Exhibition Road, London SW7. Today, tomorrow 12 noon. Telephone first to check place availability (071-938 8000). Museum admission: adult £2.50, child £1.

● National Cat Club Show: The largest cat show in the world with all varieties of pedigree cats and family pets on display. Olympia, Hammersmith, London W14. Today 10.30am-5.30pm. Adult £3, child £1.

● Monet in the 90s — final weekend: Extended opening hours have been arranged at the Academy to allow as many people as possible to see the Monet exhibition before it closes. Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly, London W1 (071-439 7438). Today, tomorrow 10am-10.30pm. Last admission 10pm. Admission to exhibition £5.

● Hospitals Christmas Carol Concert: The Massed Chorus of the London Hospitals will be performing in



Last chance: game for Monet a concert in aid of the Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund for Children. Festival Hall, London SW1. Today 3pm and 7.30pm. Matinee £4.50-£3, evening £5-£11. Box office 071-928 8800.

● Citylights Walk: Guided tour of Dickensian London and ghosts of Christmas past. Museum of London,

London Wall, London EC2. Tomorrow from 2.30pm. No need to book; adult £4, concession £3.

NEXT WEEK

● Olympia International Showjumping Championships: Top international showjumpers will be competing at this popular annual equestrian event. Olympia, Hammersmith, London W14. Thursday-Monday, matinee and evening. Tickets £8-£21. Box office 071-373 8141.

● Greenwich Concert: The Royal Naval College Chapel Choir and Orchestra, accompanied by Derek Nimmo, in a Christmas concert of carols and readings. Royal Naval College Chapel, King William Walk, Greenwich, London SE10. Wednesday 7.30pm. Adults £5.50-£3, child £4.50-£2. Further information 081-317 8687.

JUDY FROSHAUG

SPAIN WITHOUT STRAIN.

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WARM TO THE EXPERIENCE.

Working like fools and horses

Next time you see this particular toy, the trader jokes, "it'll be on Police Five... I'll put it in a black plastic bag, but, so if a policeman stops you, he won't know where you bought it." Johnny Wallington is in mid-spiel, wedged in on all sides by a cocoon of fluffy toys, wild-eyed dolls, boxed games and childish gadgets, a portly balding Ali Baba of London's East End.

Christmas has come — in varying degrees — to London's street markets, and here in East Street, south of the Thames, the lampposts are adorned with coloured lights and glittering festoons and topped with Santa Clauses, snowmen and fir trees.

Despite the seasonal trappings, however, for which the 260 licensed traders paid about £13,000, Christmas spirit is in short supply. "The punters are depressed," says Mr Wallington, whose father and grandfather ran the toy stall before him. "You can see a chatter with some of the old girls but the young ones aren't interested." Only a handful of the "hedge" (crowd) that gathers around the stall is spending any money on toys.

He puts the mood down to the economy. "Normally there's no upper limit to the spending. This year we've found that the average is between £3 and £5." Last year his top seller was the BMX scooter for £35. This year it is a Mickey Mouse doll costing £8.

The result is that the manufacturers are offloading stocks and, according to Mr Wallington, "you can buy a bloody good bargain (excuse my French)". He is selling £18 brand-name dolls for £7 and £14 soft toys for £5.

Over the road, squeezed between a stall selling tinsel Christmas decorations and another selling trainers, Tony Feasey is offering glasses of hot sarsaparilla for 25p. "The punters this year are more interested in finding value for their money than anything else," says Mr Feasey, who has had a stall in East Street for 26 years. "And there's not the rapport there used to be between traders. Everybody's under pressure now."

But the jellied eels — "cockney caviare" — at £1.10 a bowl are selling well to punters and traders alike on market days (Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday).

A 37ft banner emblazoned with "Merry Christmas" hangs across the front of the Robert Browning

IN LONDON
Street markets are hit by the unseasonal slump, but are still full of bargains for gift-hunters in a rush, Sally Brompton says



Christmas bargains: East Street market trader Johnny Wallington

Primary School, which most of the traders once attended. This is the first Christmas that East Street has been decorated and the stallholders are justifiably proud. But listen in on their early morning gossip over mugs of tea and greasy bacon sandwiches and the discussion is about why business is so bad.

Across Tower Bridge, behind Aldgate Tube station, Christmas shoppers are flocking to Sunday morning's Petticoat Lane, which is based on Middlesex Street and its nine surrounding streets. The 850 stalls sell everything from fur coats and fine china to tourist tat,

but it is the cheaper stuff which is selling best this year.

Fay Stern remembers Christmas past when the traders would push their stalls to one side when business finished at 2pm, wind up an old gramophone and dance in the street. These days, few of the stallholders live in the area and tend to rush home when their "flash" (merchandise) is packed away. Mrs Stern, aged 85, has given up her linen stall and is honorary secretary of the Petticoat Lane branch of the Stepney Street Traders Association.

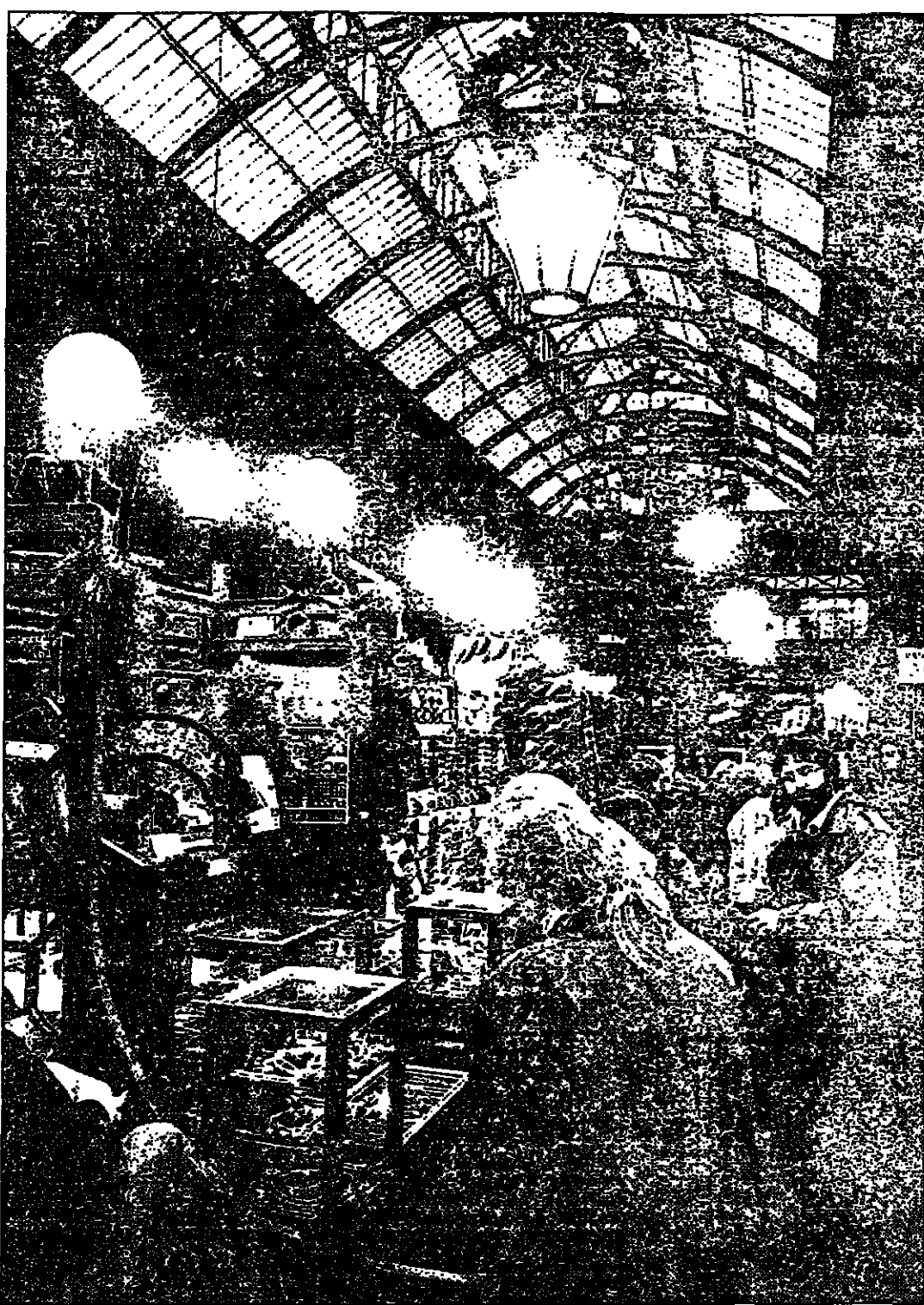
In Chapel Market, between King's Cross and the Angel, the council has hung lanterns from the lampposts and there are Christmas lights stretching from one end of the street to the other, eclipsing stallholder Ron Granger's coloured twinkling lights, which are normally the highlight of the market's Christmas decorations.

The 250 stalls sell everything from clothing and jewellery to curtains and household goods to a clientele which ranges, according to Mr Granger, from "the green well-to-do brigade from Barbours, to the ordinary working people around King's Cross, to the tourists who get off the trains and wander up here while they're waiting for their coaches". The Christmas trees are selling better than soft toys and clothing.

At Gabriel's Wharf, on the South Bank next to London Weekend Television, the regular Friday craft market will be extended to Wednesday and Thursday in the week before Christmas. Here the 40 stallholders sell clothing, handmade jewellery, hats and bags. Many also have stalls at the larger craft market at Camden Lock on Saturdays and Sundays, returning to their homes in the country during the week to knock up more merchandise. Others run their stalls as a side-line, working at other jobs during the week.

Greenpeace will be singing carols at Camden Lock on the afternoon of December 16. There will also be hot spiced cider, roast chestnuts, organic and non-organic mince pies, and the vegetable stall at the front of the market has been temporarily transformed into a stall selling Christmas wrapping paper and tree decorations.

The lock's 250 stalls sell potential gifts ranging from home-made hazelnut, almond and cherry fudge for 60p a bag up to



Cold comfort in Covent Garden market: "Everybody is depressed," says the chairman, Ray Green

individual gold rings for almost £1,000. There are puzzle games, stained-glass windows, pottery and Vietnamese snacks, produced by a former boat refugee.

Karen-Ann Gledhill makes silver and gold jewellery ranging from £8 for a small pair of studs up to £650 for 18 carat gold rings with a mixture of diamonds and other precious stones. "So far I've been selling to people who are looking for Christmas presents but end up buying the jewellery for themselves," Ms Gledhill says. "It's not a bad thing, I suppose."

In common with Ms Gledhill, Graham Bacon has a workshop at

Gabriel's Wharf and a stall at Camden Lock. He imports carpets, kilims, hats, socks and gloves made by the nomadic Mujahedin refugees in Afghanistan, which he sells for between £2.50 for a pair of gloves and £200 for his most expensive carpet. He increased his stock of £100 items after finding "there's more and more £100 cheque cards around".

Covent Garden's covered Jubilee Market is also suffering the unseasonal slump. "Everyone is so bloody depressed," says chairman Ray Green. "It stems from the customer to the trader." Eric Wilkin's stall, the Pleasure-

dome, sells dancing Coca-Cola cans for £12.99 and compact discs for £2.99 (Miss Saigon a speciality). He says: "I've been here ten years and business is well down on previous years. It's pretty quiet, to be honest with you."

Jean Robson, of Handmaid, is finding coach trippers with credit cards are her best customers. She sells hand-painted boxes and handmade lingerie and baby clothes. But after 11 years in Jubilee Market, this is her quietest Christmas. Both she and Mr Wilkin share Mr Green's sentiment: "If they'd take 2 per cent off the interest rate, we'd be smiling."

Can you resist the verbal?

OUT OF LONDON

● The Barras in Glasgow claims to be the biggest flea market in Europe, with more than 1,000 stalls. As well as fruit and veg, Christmas shoppers will find tinsel and toys, scatter cushions for her and shavers for him. Open on Saturdays and Sundays, it is well known for its "auctioneers" with their Glaswegian patter.

● Newcastle's Quayside street market is one of the few legally entitled to trade on a Sunday, thanks to an Act of Parliament in 1976. Since the same act prohibits the city council from making a profit, the traders' overheads are low. Well-known local pitchers include Don Harris, who sells towels, and Kitty Hope, who sells stoneware, a kind of Geordie bread. With 250 stalls, the Quayside is larger than Newcastle's Bigg Market, open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays with only 35 stalls.

● The Moor, Sheffield has about 100 stalls set up Monday to Saturday. Traders sell a variety of goods from wicker baskets to handmade pots and party nits.

● In Leeds the open market is next to the covered market. Normally trading only takes place on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, but from next week it will also be open on Mondays until December 31. For a brace of pheasants or a first-rate turkey, go along to the special poultry auction held in aid of charity next Saturday in Game Row. The entire weekend will be devoted to raising money for the local hospital's children's ward.

● Lock Meadow in Maidstone is a general retail open-air market on Tuesdays and Saturdays with 450 stalls. More specialised markets are held on Thursdays, "house clearance" day, and on Fridays for fruit and veg.

● Bull Ring, Birmingham: the city has held a charter to hold a market since 1166 and there has been one near the Bull Ring site for 124 years. Now there are four and all will be open six days a week from next Tuesday. As well as the famous Rag Market (second-hand clothes and designer wear) there is the Monday to Saturday all-purpose Bull Ring open market with 150 stalls. The 140-stall flea market should prove fruitful and the 90-stall Row Market specialises in teenagers' T-shirts and leather jackets.

LEE RODWELL

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believed that his team will have the opportunity to work with an old friend, Enriquez, a senior design manager at respected architecture firm Schube & Associates. When he worked for Formtek, Enriquez, and he had a design staff that included Williams and

1

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Letters home from a secretive maestro

Norman Lebrecht on correspondence that will fuel speculation about Karajan's rise

The dark years of Herbert von Karajan have come unexpectedly to light in a bundle of letters being sold at Sotheby's, New York, on Tuesday. The conductor, who died last year, kept resolutely quiet about his career and sympathies in Nazi Germany. The letters, written to his parents in Salzburg, fill in some gaps and contain at least one ugly anti-Semitic remark.



Karajan: dark past

They do not resolve the controversy of exactly when he joined the Nazi party - whether as an early 1933 enthusiast or, as he claimed, as a reluctant 1935 conscript. Halfway between the contested dates, in June 1934 while jobless in Berlin, he wrote home refusing to visit an ailing grandmother in Graz, saying he was busy registering with the Reich Chamber of Music. As an Austrian citizen, he was not obliged to enlist with Goebbels' bureau of racially pure and politically pliable musicians. Evidently he joined to signify support for the regime.

Soon after, still without visible means of sustenance, he declined a possible opening at the Volksoper in Vienna, complaining that "all of Palestine" seemed to gather there. Any connection with Jewish artists in Austria might have prejudiced his chances in the Third Reich.

Karajan always maintained that he joined the Nazi Party under duress, as a precondition for becoming opera conductor at Aachen. The letters reveal that he was, by then, in great demand,

with competitive offers coming from Karlsruhe and Berlin. He was able to dictate his own terms, rather than submit to political pressure, and managed to negotiate a higher salary than the mayor of Aachen.

What turned the 27-year-old musician into a suddenly desirable commodity remains unclear as his activities in Berlin in the crucial year of 1934 - for which he was twice investigated by the US Justice Department on suspicion of having been a secret police agent. On getting the Aachen job, he gloated that he was now expected to emerge as one of Germany's major conductors within two years. By 1938 he was hailed as *Das Wunder Karajan*.

In July 1944, eight days after the failed attempt on Hitler's life, he wrote from a spa saying the time had come to "free ourselves" of earthly matters and restore music to its spiritual heights.

The 138 letters came into the possession of Karajan's brother Wolfgang, with whom he had an uneasy relationship. Rivalry flared up when Herbert threatened legal action to stop Wolfgang using the family name while touring America with his organ ensemble.

Karajan was highly protective of his privacy, and would presumably have tried to repossess the letters had he known of their existence. They passed to the present, unidentified owner in 1978.

Although Karajan's musical reputation has declined to some extent since his death, it shines undimmed in Japan, where Sony paid more than £10 million for his final legacy of concert videos. Tuesday's bidding is expected to realise \$250,000 (£128,000) from Japanese collectors; independent scholars may never get to examine the conductor's domestic version of his phenomenal rise.

OPERA

Time for a change of tune

If our opera houses cannot compete with Europe, they need urgent rethinking, says Graham Vick. He talks to Richard Morrison

If the future of opera in Britain lies with any one person, that person is probably Graham Vick. European opera houses are queuing to offer him large budgets to stage their productions. Liverpool-born Vick can afford to be selective. "How do you judge what are going to be the lesser nightmares?"

In Britain his stagings have shown astonishing range, from the intense poignancy of his *Madam Butterfly* for English National Opera to his clever elucidation of Luciano Berio's *Un Re in Ascolta* at Covent Garden. Yet perhaps his finest achievements have not been in opera houses at all, but in the community halls visited by his own company, City of Birmingham Touring Opera (CBTO).

Last year it cut across cultural barriers with an Indian opera by Ravi Shankar; this year it won huge success with its "pocket version" of Wagner's *Ring* (four nights' music condensed into two; 80 musicians condensed to 18; and audiences cheering at every stop). It has so delighted its paymaster - Birmingham City Council - that the local authority has vastly increased its subsidy and promised a new, 500-seat theatre for the company by 1992.

Whichever way one looks at it, Vick is floating to the top of the operatic pool. All the more disconcerting, then, to hear him express forebodings about the very future of big opera in this country, despite the so-called opera boom of the last few years.

He contends that the notion of London's two companies, the Royal Opera and English National Opera, being considered part of the top international circuit is now ludicrous, so small has the subsidy become in comparison with that given to their foreign counterparts. "We can't compete anymore; all our companies are spiralling downwards. There should be at least one opera company capable of putting on big productions. Here, the only option is the low-budget one."

Vick flourishes some devastating figures. "For the production of Weill's *Mahagonny* which I did in Florence this summer, I was given a budget of £750,000, whereas for staging the world premiere of Stephen Oliver's *Timon of Athens* for ENO, I'll be given a £65,000 budget. For doing *Otello* in Berlin in the spring I will have a budget of £600,000, whereas two operas I am doing for the Royal Opera are budgeted at £140,000 each.

The difference is just absurd." Could it not be argued that small budgets challenge the director's ingenuity? "That's nonsense. Of course it is part of my job to cope with a restricted budget. My point is that if we want Covent Garden to return to the international league, our expectations must be of a different order. Tiny budgets undermine everything: singers, conductors, rehearsals."

But Vick also sees other dangers for British opera, not directly related to funding. Surprisingly, he is a severe critic of what is usually termed "producer's opera": a staging in which the opera has been twisted and squeezed into a visual or historical "concept" that bears little relation to that envisaged by the composer. When such productions drifted into British opera houses in the late 1970s, they had shock impact. Now Verdi in jackboots is a cliché.

Vick argues that British directors are obsessively following "Conceptual fashion." "There is a magic instinct. We are over-influenced by what happens in Frankfurt or wherever. German theatre was where 'director's theatre' grew up. The director there was always a dictator who marshalled his forces in order to communicate some strong concept. In Britain, by contrast, the best directors worked within the tradition of making the spoken word and the actors central."

Now, says Vick, we are trying to adopt the European concern with concept, which appears new and exciting because it is not British. "Our own tradition is slipping away. And the enormous emphasis placed on the visual aspect of opera has led to a lack of concentration on the vocal expression. I find, again and again, inadequate vocal and musical preparation, and casting done on purely physical grounds."

Vick is equally scathing about the customary contribution of conductors: "A lot of them don't come to production rehearsals: it's a much-suppressed truth." Nature abhors a vacuum, so Vick tends to mould the vocal performance as he is rehearsing the staging, he admits that this has sometimes led to difficulties later.

The CBTO policy of staging cut-down operas is not original. Vick was himself staging pocket operas with Opera-Go-Round in Scotland at the start of his career. But touring companies have tradition-



Graham Vick: "We can't compete anymore; all our companies are spiralling downwards."

ally been minor-league: training camps for young singers. Rarely does a producer of Vick's stature become so involved.

One of his aims is clearly to widen operatic appreciation. "After the first night of the *Ring* Saga, a radio reporter asked a man in the audience if he had ever been to an opera before. He replied, 'Only once: it was an Indian opera'. So for that man, opera as an artform is defined by Ravi Shankar's *Ghanashyam* and then by our pocket *Ring*. Isn't that terrific?"

But Vick's other chief aim is even more radical: to demonstrate that the opera company of the future could have total flexibility, unencumbered by permanent orchestras and choruses. "CBTO can do anything it wants, and that's how opera generally should go. At

present, companies are trapped in 19th-century structures."

Vick points out that last year, for *Ghanashyam*, CBTO consisted of 15 Asian musicians, while this year its orchestra has comprised the 18 symphonic instrumentalists needed for Jonathan Dove's Wagner re-orchestration. CBTO's next project - a staging of *Les Boreades* by the 18th-century composer Rameau - will require completely different forces again: Baroque-style performers (plus a choreographer who, says Vick, "is expert in 18th-century dance but has his heart in Merce Cunningham"). That kind of flexibility is difficult for normal companies.

A more unlikely prophet of doom than the unrepentantly chirpy Vick would be hard to imagine. That makes his warnings the more

striking. At Covent Garden there are rumours of new productions being cancelled, of redundancies, and even of the season being curtailed to a few months in order that at least one or two big productions are mounted. At ENO the new younger audiences won in the 1980s have been hit hard by the recession. Even if the government wrote off the big companies' deficits, the increase in subsidy needed to bring them back into international reckoning is now too large to contemplate realistically. Opera administrators must examine the success of alternative approaches, and ponder the future hard.

● CBTO's *Ring* Saga is at the Cocks Moors Woods Leisure Centre, Birmingham, tonight and Monday.

Collective swamping

JAZZ

John Rae Collective/
Pat Kane
Queen Elizabeth Hall

ACCORDING to their followers in Scotland, the John Rae Collective can already be numbered amongst the premier jazz groups in Britain. Monday's appearance at the South Bank did their reputation no harm, though the sextet still looks some way short of a guaranteed place in the first division.

Led by the drummer John Rae, the musicians have been together for three years, and have just released a new album, *The Big If Smiles Again*. Their fluent and energetic repertoire falls into that nebulous category known as "post bop", in which youthful enthusiasm and better-sketched soloing are given first priority.

The first set found them grappling with the sound balance, a task made more difficult by the

hall's acoustics. Rae is not the kind of drummer-cum-leader who insists on stamping his personality on every single bar. All the same, he frequently came close to swamping his soloists.

The problems were still apparent when the group was joined by Pat Kane, singer with the pop band Hue and Cry, on whose album the Collective recently appeared.

Kane's opening song was lost amidst the churning of the rhythm section. There was a vast improvement after the Collective was reduced to a duo, with MacKenzie and bassist Ronnie Rae supplying a sparse backdrop to "What's New". Perched on a stool, Kane gave a creditable, if self-conscious performance: on this song, nobody can ever quite escape the shadow of Sinatra. Throughout, he seemed most at ease on ballads, the lack of variation in his voice outweighed by arrangements which made good use of the Collective's ever-changing line-up.

CLIVE DAVIS

Twee tales from the woods

THEATRE
Heaven's Up
Playhouse

"IF YOU believe in God, then anything is possible." Most of us usually manage to believe in fables for just long enough to prevent Tinkerbell from snuffing it in *Fairy Pan*, but this preachy "family" show (adapted by Jeremy Lloyd from his best-selling *Woodland Gospels According to Captain Beaky*) may stick in some post-Christian teeth.

I felt slightly queasy watching Captain Beaky and his band of evangelists hoppy-skip about the stage, vainly searching for some rodent agnostic or insect atheist to convert to the ways of Jesus. Artful Owl (Patrick Cargill) tells the story of the gospels attractively enough, calmly briefing the animals as if he is Obi Wan Kenobi explaining the force to Luke Skywalker. But the dialogue is as heavy and laboured as a sketch-in a cheap student revue, like a stone wrapped in the

wispy Turin Shroud of a plot.

Then the band of cute evangelists come up against their old adversary, Hissing Sid. Like so much else about Wendy Toy's thoroughly unmagical production, the snakes are disappointing: mere glove puppets sticking out of holes in the garbed, knotted trees of Claire Lyth's set, whose soaring, crooked heights dwarf the actors.

The tacky, tarty costumes have the whiff of some purgatorial Oxford frequented by fallen angels. Beaky himself (Mike Berry) resembles a cross between a mangy capoe and Captain Bird's Eye, but it is Barry Bat (Marsha Bland) - wearing what seems to be

a converted lampshade from some Sixties Halloween party - who steals the show. She gives a sparkling performance, singing with a voice that resembles Ratty's crushed-velvet costume in the lower gears, but which, once revved up, begins to take on the qualities of a laser-beam à la Bonnie Langford.

Jim Parker's music is inoffensively quaint and studded with pretty tunes, but too many of the songs are ensemble bashes, with the cast standing in a line chanting, as if at a Sunday-school singalong. As a result, the characters' individual qualities are never firmly established, and it is hard not to feel alienated by so shabby a work with so palpable a design. The show makes an attractive scripture lesson, but it is a flaccid musical, as tame as it is twee.

MICHAEL WRIGHT



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● SPORT 25-31
● BUSINESS AND FINANCE 32-37
● WEEKEND MONEY 38-42

SUMMARY

Fighting back



ALMOST a year has passed since Mike Tyson (above) lost the undisputed heavyweight championship of the world to James "Buster" Douglas in Tokyo but the memory of that defeat still haunts a boxer who, until then, had seemed invincible.

Tonight in Atlantic City, Tyson takes another step along the road to recovering the title when he meets Alex Stewart, who was born in London but is based in the United States. Full preview Page 28

RUGBY UNION

Ill fortune

LONDON'S hopes of winning rugby union's divisional championship for a third successive year were improved when today's opponents, the Midlands, lost two players to illness and injury. The two unbeaten teams meet at the Stoop Memorial ground while North take on the South and South-West. Page 29

SKIING

Downhill start



THE men's downhill World Cup season begins in Val d'Isère today with a host of newcomers seeking to fill the void left by Pirmin Zurbriggen's retirement. Meanwhile, in the French resort of Tignes, Jilly Curry (above), of Britain, was lying third in a women's freestyle event. Reports Page 26

FOOTBALL

Rising force

THE rise of Leeds United has more than a little to do with one player, Gordon Strachan. On the day Strachan's new club meets his old, Manchester United, Clive White considers the continuing influence of an evergreen talent. Page 27

GOLF

Cutting it fine

THE two leading players in the world, Greg Norman and Nick Faldo, narrowly avoided missing the cut after the second round of the Australian Classic tournament in Melbourne yesterday. After a round of 73, Norman is seven shots behind the leader, Greg Turner, of New Zealand, with Faldo a further two shots adrift. Page 28

YACHTING

Conner's view



DENNIS Conner (above), the American skipper, is preparing for the next America's Cup in San Diego next March but he does not expect the British to be among his closest rivals. Page 29

RACING

Ticket to ride

TODAY The Times offers readers the chance to win luxury trips to visit to two of the most enjoyable days of the racing calendar — the Rank Holiday Festival at Kempton Park on December 26 and 27. Competition Page 30

England win has limited appeal

FROM ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
PERTH

SCOREBOARD FROM PERTH

New Zealand won toss

NEW ZEALAND				
	Runs	Wickets	Extras	Over
J G Wright c Lewis b Bicknell	6	1	122	21
Edged rising ball to second slip				
A H Jones run out	26	4	53	36
Crowe hit ball straight to Tufnell				
M D Crowe c Russell b Lewis	37	2	65	67
Glancing wide down the leg side				
1st J G Bicknell c Lewis b Small	19	1	42	30
Slid straight drive to mid-off				
K Rutherford b Fraser	11	4	47	32
Wide gap between bat and pad				
1st J G Bicknell c Lewis b Bicknell	15	1	25	21
Slid drive for running catch at point				
C Z Harris c Russell b Tufnell	0	1	13	9
Sharp low catch on leg side				
R G Petrie not out	14	1	58	42
C Pringle c and b Small	2	1	7	7
Edged ball on to pad — slid on offside				
D K Morrison c Russell b Lewis	7	1	36	26
Driving at outswinger				
W Watson b Lewis	1	1	7	8
Angled ball shot at straight ball				
Extras (4 b, 8 w, 4 nb, 4) —	20			
Total (48.2 overs, 204mins)	158			

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University sticks by its principles to a degree

Oxford go into the annual University match at Twickenham on Tuesday knowing that they are underdogs, yet with an undercurrent of pride that they are upholding one important principle of selection. It has to be asked, however, whether the stance is worth it in the light of the expedient abandonment of other principles.

I doubt if Bowring, the sponsor, is much bothered either way. The televised match is a sell-out, and commands the attention of much of the rugby world. Neither are Oxford senior tutors too bothered — apart from those with a direct interest such as Dr Alan Taylor, Oxford's president — because they are predominantly uncaring or simply ignorant of the event's existence.

Much of the sporting community, inside and outside Oxford, welcomed the counter-revolution

against interference within the club by a handful of Australians and an American. Yet the match, far from being a contest between ambitious undergraduates, is still a kind of exhibition between visiting postgraduates and foreigners. As the Rugby Football Union (RFU) repeatedly complains, the match has no more bearing on the development of English, or university, rugby than a Barbarians fixture; however competitively it may be played.

This year, there are some two dozen postgraduates among the 30 players, and enough foreigners for Mark Egan, Oxford's captain from Dublin, appropriately to label his team "cosmopolitan". It is not known whether his third-year postgraduate cleric, Stileman, at lock, who played for Cambridge in 1985, has religious conviction that his place would



COMMENT
DAVID MILLER
CHIEF SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

not more deservedly go to an undergraduate.

The issue at stake is simple: for whose benefit is the match played? There is only one fact on which we can be certain. It is not played for the benefit of those for whom it was originally intended, undergraduates in their first four years of residence.

This year's particular Oxford controversy is an echo of that in the Boat Race three years ago, when a similar mutiny by Americans was overthrown and Oxford staged a memorable

victory among the survivors. Egan will be hoping for similar fortune on Tuesday. However, the over-age factor repeatedly arises in rowing and rugby and will always be contentious.

Dr Taylor points out that 30 per cent of Oxford University students are now postgraduate, and that this figure will grow. "It's an international university," he says. "Why don't we restrict it to British students, the RFU may as well. What we are doing is developing the under-21 side."

That is only part consolation for the more genuine team, whose

fixture is played at the Harlequins ground the same morning. The universities are pressing Twickenham to accept the curfew-raiser on their pitch, but have agreed not to push for this until after the World Cup next year.

Dr Taylor denies that potential Oxford undergraduate students are likely to be diverted by the presence of postgraduates to other universities such as Durham or Loughborough. The under-21 teams, he suggests, are a stepping stone to international rugby just as much as the senior match has always been.

But what of the move by the Oxford committee and by Egan, the new captain in the spring, to prevent the team being professionalised by foreigners? Some would claim that it already was, by the mere fact of their importation; and that one degree more

professional was neither here nor there.

However, the committee wanted to prevent the club being taken over by any particular captain, foreign or otherwise, especially one introducing outside professional coaching, as did Brian Smith, the Australian stand-off half and last year's captain. It was beside the point that he lost.

Imported foreign players, and especially Americans, tend not to understand the ethics of Oxfordshire sport. They arrive as mature adults, and see the situation as nothing more than a sporting exercise that they can sort out in a month. In rowing, and now rugby, some Americans at Oxford have discovered that this is not so.

Egan has proved himself an able and popular captain. He dropped the aggrieved Smith —

for arriving late for training, allegedly because of a tutorial — and he led his side on a highly successful tour of Japan.

In spite of a continuing problem at stand-off half in Smith's absence, sufficient confidence has been maintained this autumn for Oxford to consider that they will give the opposition a run for their money on Tuesday.

The rise in professional attitudes is regretted by Dr Taylor, a former Brasenose half back who played for the Greyhounds, — the Oxford second XV — but he thinks the trend is inevitable if Oxford rugby is to stay in touch with the first-class game. "You've got to be committed in strategy and detail," he says. "I'm not sure I like it even at international level, but the tendency is not going to go away."

Bishop and Ambrose cause havoc as Pakistan are trapped on a bad pitch of their own making

West Indies are poised to win series

FROM JOHN WOODCOCK IN LAHORE

THE third Test match between Pakistan and West Indies, and the series with it, was virtually decided here yesterday in an atmosphere of profound anticlimax. In reply to West Indies' first-innings total of 294, Pakistan made 93 for six, a position from which there is no realistic chance of their recovering.

To some extent Pakistan are being hoist with their own petard. Told to provide a pitch which would take spin and guarantee a result, the groundsman simply went too far. By the time Pakistan came to go in yesterday morning it was already breaking up. With a couple of dubious umpiring decisions accounting for two of their first five batsmen, they were 56 for five before Haynes had even to make a change of bowling.

Rather than being hamstrung by the conditions, the West Indies fast bowlers produced an increasing number of unplayable balls, the last of which, just as bad light was about to stop play, disposed of Imran, caught off a glove, when he and Wasim Akram had added a bravely determined 45 and been together for 15 overs.

With Pakistan needing only two more runs to avoid the follow-on, they will have a chance to get a little of their own back when West Indies bat again today, though I do not see them bowling as effectively as Bishop and Ambrose did yesterday.

For fear of even having to make 70 or 80 in the fourth innings, Haynes was not, in fact, intending to put Pakistan back in. On Thursday the pitch had played fairly well. By last night it had become

something of a curiosity, to judge from the way the West Indians were examining it. The ball off which Imran was caught at short leg reared almost vertically, reviving memories of Brisbane in the days of its sticky dogs.

The start had again been delayed, this time for 45 minutes, while the sun burnt off another heavy dew. Being Friday, the week's holiest day, the lunch interval was then extended to 90 minutes, to allow for prayers, and when the rain brought the day to a close only 45 overs had been bowled. When one-day international falls on Fridays the need for urgency influences even the mullahs, who allow on those occasions only the usual 40 minutes for lunch. Test cricket, it seems, is too serious a business for such dispensation.

By lunchtime yesterday not even 90 minutes of the most intensive supplication could, I think, have held up the West Indians for long. Already Shoaib and Ammar Malik had been bowled by Bishop. Shoaib, by a real beauty that moved from leg to off and Ammar by one that went the other way. Being on the back foot and with the ball well up to him, Shoaib had no chance; Ammar, though forward, left just enough daylight between bat and pad for the ball to squeeze through. It was splendid bowling.

The best crowd of the series — it might have touched 7,000 at one stage — were made to suffer a painful afternoon. Pakistan might have known that it was not to be their day on hearing that Rameez Raja had had his car written off by bus on his way to the ground, and been badly enough shaken himself not to be sent in first. As if that was not enough, after he had gone in at the fall of the second wicket and batted stoutly for 50 minutes, he was dismissed to be given out, caught at short leg also off an Ambrose lifter.

In five Test innings, batting at No. 3, the 19-year-old Zahid Fazal has only once got to the wicket later than the second over, and never with more than 15 runs on the board. A much rougher hap-



Power play: Hooper drives another boundary in his resolute innings of 134

Two southern counties abstained in Durham vote

By RICHARD STREETON

FOLLOWING Durham's success in winning first-class status, their first priority will be to find ways to try to expedite the planning approval they need for their headquarters ground at Chester-le-Street. North-eastern MPs from all parties are to be asked to lobby Michael Heseltine, the secretary of state for the environment, to see if he can help.

Though Durham's election was unopposed at the Test and County Cricket Board meeting, it has emerged that two southern counties abstained from voting. Neither argued against Durham but it is understood that one was concerned whether Durham had

sufficient playing strength and the other had financial reservations.

Durham admit that, initially, they may struggle for regular success, just as Glamorgan did in 1931. They are more sanguine, though, on the fiscal front. Now that first-class cricket is guaranteed, Durham expect their foundation fund, which has already reached £1 million in guarantees to receive fresh impetus from sponsors and other backers.

With more than £500,000 needed annually to run a first-class county, Durham's short-comings seem likely to make Durham the last entrants to the championship for a long time. No other minor county has

plans to seek promotion.

Shropshire and Staffordshire in recent years considered trying to do so but found it was impractical for monetary reasons. It did not help, that unlike Durham, they are close geographically to existing first-class teams. This also applies to Cheshire and Herefordshire, two other strong minor county clubs.

Ireland and Scotland, who play in English one-day events, might be thought to be candidates to seek first-class status but they, too, could not afford it. Instead they are finishing plans to apply for associate membership of the International Cricket Council in order to compete in the four-yearly ICC trophy

alongside nations such as Bermuda, Denmark, Fiji and Zimbabwe.

Durham's election overshadowed several other decisions at the TCCB meeting. The guideline on pitch preparation has been revised to allow a green pitch need not necessarily mean it is unsuitable. Groundsmen no longer have to aim at providing a pitch that is "white or straw coloured". Instead the pitch must be "dry, firm and true, providing pace and even bounce" and help spinners later.

The board also decided that next summer television companies may install miniature cameras in the stumps — like

those being used in Australia — but microphones remain barred in the middle during play.

It was also agreed that no tie-breaker will be invoked in 1991 should the three-match Test trophy one-day series with West Indies finish level. The trophy will be shared should the teams each win a game with the third match tied.

Paul Jarvis, the Yorkshire fast bowler, who was yesterday's cricket committee to answer questions about statements in the media following Yorkshire's decision not to sign an overseas player has had the meeting postponed until next Tuesday so that he can be legally represented.

SKIING

Modest Kitt joins initial assault on Zurbriggen's title

FROM BRIAN JAMES IN VAL D'ISERE

THE king is dead, or rather has abdicated, and the princes and royal cousins crowd in for the throne. Now the incomparable skier of the Eighties, Pirmin Zurbriggen, has retired, practice for the first downhill of the World Cup season has seen interesting new men hustling into view, together with skiers no longer young, but also no longer overshadowed by a master.

In the first two days of practice, Denny Rey, a young Frenchman, then a Norwegian, then a Norwegian, came down the famous OK course with times to cause sharp intakes of frosty breath. By the end of all practice yesterday, five more comparative unknowns were interspersed with former winners like Danny Maher and Peter Winkler in the ten-fastest list.

Bernard Fabner, a young Swiss, was best, and Jan Thoren, yet another Norwegian, has appeared, but perhaps the most interesting was A. J. Kitt, aged 22, from New Zealand, only for the fact that nothing will induce an otherwise most friendly sportsman to reveal the names those initials conceal. Observations that perhaps his mother wanted a girl and called him Alice can be dismissed: both parents are ski instructors, and A. J. was marked for this macho life from birth, having been given his first skis at two.

His ski-circus nickname must suffice. It is "Alpine Jet", and was earned in the two last races of last season when a fourth and sixth sent him soaring in the official rankings from seventh place to eighth.

Of yesterday's third-fastest time he said: "I could have been better. I made a mistake in the compression." Of his sudden rise: "I have been on the circuit four years. Learning, picking up bits and pieces from the best guys. Some of it is just coming together for me." Of his chance of taking Zurbriggen's place: "No way. No one will. Like Stenmark, some guys are irreplaceable. I don't have that sort of aim. But I will be happy to be third still at the end of the race."

The only rise to match that of Kitt in recent times was that of Kristian Ghedina, the Italian, aged 21, who gained a second and two firsts in the last three World Cups of last season: the first victory coming in his home town, Cortina. He, too, is a son of instructors, a difference being that his mother was killed in a ski accident when he was 15, and Kristian admitted to great searching of his inner depths before deciding to continue.

Given that underlying emotion, Zurbriggen's retirement was a blow. He was a son of instructors, a difference being that his mother was killed in a ski accident when he was 15, and Kristian admitted to great searching of his inner depths before deciding to continue.

Curry challenge fading

JILLY Curry of Britain, is likely to relinquish her title in the World Cup freestyle skiing combined championship in Tignes today (a Special Correspondent writes).

Curry, aged 27, from Surrey, lies in bronze medal position after two of the three events the mogul for bump skiing and the acrobatic ski-jumping.

Kissling is strong in the moguls and ballet, but always poor in the jumping. She completed only one very basic attempt at a

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Vine values wrapping as much as contents

By KEN LAWRENCE

THERE is nothing that warms the heart of a sports follower more than a good fighting comeback, and these are suddenly sprouting all over our television screens to set the nerve ends tingling.

In boxing, Mike Tyson is making a comeback; so, too, is the British heavyweight champion, Gary Mason. Just when snooker seemed to have become a turn-off, up came Stephen Hendry and Steve Davis with that riveting UK championship final that really puts a little glimmer into the World Matchplay that opens this weekend and should, if ITV strikes it lucky, culminate in another Hendry-Davis showdown in a week's time.

Fresh from presenting us with that Hendry-Davis classic ("The greatest I have ever seen," he says), David Vine also returns with the old favourite, *Ski Sunday*. This BBC show faces considerably more competition than when it first took to the pike 14 years ago. Eurosport is giving a vast amount of screen

those people... they knew Klammer, they knew Zurbriggen.

Vine and the BBC crew were in Val d'Isere on Tuesday and spent the next two days talking with the stars. "We may use only 40 seconds, but it is necessary. While it is rather important that we get the racing first, *Sunday* is more about the man. You can buy a pound of sugar from Tesco or you can buy a pound of sugar from Harrods. The difference is in the presentation and the wrapping."

At the BBC they call Vine the "man of the three S's... snooker, skiing and show jumping. He has no favourite. I enjoy them all. They are aesthetically acceptable. I remember an old lady once telling me why she liked them. She said that the contestants were being invited into her home and she didn't want them spitting in her front room. While the needle was there, competitors in all those three sports all conducted themselves quite properly."

Whether Tyson comes back himself remains to be seen.

hours of the morning is a matter of some conjecture. My suspicion is that he may just be back to the sort of form that once made him invincible, and that the London-born, Alex Stewart may feel that Tyson has been acting a little improperly. Tyson's latest comeback contest is like the one with James "Buster" Douglas, a fighting plan when he lost his world heavyweight crown, exclusive to satellite. Sky Movies has the rights to show the fight here and will screen it from 1.30am, opening up with a look at the Douglas-Tyson and Douglas-Holyfield encounters. The big fight is due at about 4am.

Mason's comeback at the Albert Hall will get a wider audience — BBC's *Sportsnight* (Wednesday, 10pm). His opponent, James Pritchard, is hardly in the Tyson league, and there may be better action from FA and UEFA Cup acts, or the much vaunted and much criticised Grand Slam Tennis Cup. As for the revitalised snooker scene, ITV cashes in on the World Matchplay. Pricings up on LWT today and tomorrow.

THE WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

TODAY: If the Regal Trophy rugby league match between Widnes and Leeds today is half as good as last week's, it should be a treat. It is just part of BBC's Grandstand (8.55pm), which includes basketball, cheerleader races and skiing from France.

TOMORROW: It could be a bad morning for the English: Mike Tyson fights Alex Stewart, one of Shephard's Bush, at around 4am on Sky Movies, and the British heavyweight champion, Gary Mason, will have to perform at the round of one-day cricket matches. Screensport also has some rampaging Aussies — the rugby league team which plays France (2pm) — plus live golf from the United States (8pm).

MONDAY: If snooker from Brentwood does not appear on ITV at 2.20pm, then learn how to fix the lugs at Subbano by watching the German Open (2.20pm). Eurosport shows the US Series Open golf (2.20pm).

TUESDAY: The cricket may be the same, but the backdrop is different: England play New Zealand, in Sydney this time (Sky One, from 3.30pm). David Vine, back from the snow slopes, is at Olympia for one of sport's real live events, the Christmas show jumping show (BBC1, 11pm).

FRIDAY: With David Vine now heading for Italy and the weekend's World Cup, Dan Maswell comments on the Grand Slam Tennis Cup, where the winner collects £1 million. Snow jumping highlights are on BBC1 at 11.20pm, and the tennis highlights are on BBC2 at 11.20pm. The World Snooker final continues — England against New Zealand at Brisbane (Sky One, 11pm).

REAL TENNIS

Snow settles semi-final in fourth set

THE world's leading amateur, Julian Snow, reached his first George Wimpey British Open final yesterday when he opened the former world champion, Chris Ronaldson, second, in an enthralling four-setter at Queen's Club, London (Sally Jones writes).

Snow, recovering brilliantly from nine games in row to lead by a set and 4-0, only for Ronaldson to step up the pace and take the next nine.

Snow, cutting the ball severely on the floor, then began to show signs of fatigue, his sluggishness, finding the tangle and forcing his opponent into unexpected errors. After losing four match points, Snow finally clinched his first major victory over Ronaldson with a lucky shot which bounced unthinkably straight down the wall beside the grille.

GEORGE WIMPEY BRITISH OPEN: Julian Snow vs Chris Ronaldson, 6-2, 4-6, 6-3, 6-3.

Venue is a

The inspirational footballer who is enjoying an Indian summer in the winter of his career

What makes Strachan run and run

CLIVE WHITE

THE question, Howard Wilkinson said, was not so much "How does he keep on doing it?" as "Why shouldn't he keep on doing it?" Presumably, Gordon Strachan's longevity was taken for granted the day he joined Leeds United and agreed to try to help revive the fortunes of a club on which the rigours of life had taken their toll.

"I'm sure Gordon would acknowledge the fact that with the benefit of all the information we've got these days," the Leeds manager said, "it shouldn't be a surprise that footballers of his age [Strachan is 34 in February] are still performing. But it is, Physiologically, there aren't that many reasons why 30 should be for whom the bell tolls."

Wilkinson sees no reason why Strachan should not go on playing at the highest level until he is 38. Somehow one doubts whether such words of encouragement for one of football's evergreens got much of an airing in the transfer discussions of 20 months ago when Wilkinson agreed to take Strachan off Alex Ferguson's hands for £300,000. The Manchester United manager has since felt the odd pang of remorse over that decision. It is nothing like as acute as the pain he will suffer today should Strachan, the inspirational force of Leeds, orchestrate a victory on his first return to Old Trafford.

To be fair to Ferguson, he and Strachan had probably gone as far as they could as manager and player together. In more than eight years at

two clubs, they have collected a stack of silverware, including the Cup Winners' Cup, which they won while at Aberdeen, but perhaps the most to motivate each other had worn thin. Leeds provide Strachan with a new challenge: to make them great again.

The captaincy has provided Strachan with another incentive. He had lived for too long in the shadow of Bryan Robson. Wilkinson compared it to a marriage in which one partner was excessively dominant; Strachan needed to get out and be his own man again if his career was to have its Indian summer. He believed that the responsibility of captaincy had added 10 to 15 per cent to his game.

But none of this would have been possible without the basic requisite of good fitness. Strachan said that he had always trained hard even in his formative years at Dundee when he went "to all the wrong places at all the wrong times". For the last 10 years he has progressively taken greater care of his body. He knows that if he eats well, sleeps well and trains well he can go into a match with a clear conscience.

Like any self-respecting Scot, he eats his porridge every morning, aware of its carbohydrates value. He takes note, too, of what his fellow athletes are eating and ever since he

saw Ivan Lendl munching a banana between games he has stuck those in his porridge. "It's not a ridiculous diet," he said. "It's just being sensible, really."

Three years ago Bobby Charlton put him on to a Norwegian who specialises in acupuncture — acupuncture without the needles. "There's a flow of energy through the body that just needs to be balanced. So if a particular muscle feels tired, he just works on it with finger pressure. I can do a bit myself before games. Mind you, I get some weird looks."

How much good all this, not forgetting the seaweed tablets, has done him he cannot say for sure, but psychologically at least he knows he feels better for it and that in two years he has not missed a game. He certainly looks good on it, as bright-eyed and bushy-tailed as when the "wee man" with the mop of red hair first scampers down that right wing 17 years ago.

He refuses to comment on his form, which has been outstanding this season, or compare with before other than to say that he is enjoying his football as much as ever. "I've not changed my style, which is reassuring. Somebody once said that when you get to 30 you'll be able to play inside and have a couple of young boys running up and down the wing for you. I thought that sounded nice. But I get more enjoyment coming off a park as a winner and feeling shattered."



Strachan: fresh incentives

"It's really all down to hard work and a love of the game. I keep trying to explain this to the younger boys, like Speed and Batty. It's not just Saturday's game they should be training for now, but also the one 10 years from now. They've got to do as much as they can because they'll find the benefit in later years."

As someone who wants to have no regrets about himself, it frustrates him when others do not realise their full potential. One senses that David Batty, who has been included in the England B squad to play Algeria next week, might be a case in question.

"He's a weird character. In training, he's terrible. He mucks about. Once the game starts, though, he's

buzzing everywhere. He's been compared to Johnny Giles and Billy Bremner. I call him Billy Giles. He can pass, tackle and head. Once he starts scoring, he'll be even better. He's lucky enough to have all these qualities. Whether he uses them properly is up to him."

Arguably the most exciting midfield in the country is completed by Gary Speed and Gary McAllister, who by coincidence has taken over Strachan's right wing slot in the Scotland team, though Strachan believes that Scotland will be better served by playing him in the middle. As for his own international aspirations, they have been well sated by 43 caps, more than he thought he would have won as a 17-year-old in two World Cups. "It would be greedy to want more," he said.

He flirted just once with the idea of a move abroad and a deal was almost concluded with Lens, the French club, before he went to Elland Road. "I decided that I needed a camaraderie around me. I think you need to be a special type of person to go abroad, single-minded like Archibald and Souness. I need a laugh and a joke to keep me going. I'd be scared. Soon as you get there and take your trousers off somebody might start laughing and you can't understand why."

So the question, "Gordon, what's your trousers?" must remain one of the great imponderables of our time.

Arsenal hoping that plastic makes for a perfect turnaround

By CLIVE WHITE

JUST two weeks ago and with 12 minutes of their game against Queen's Park Rangers remaining, Arsenal were staring at defeat and, as far as they knew, an 11-point deficit to Liverpool to boot. Arsenal faltered to draw, the championship race, which had looked all but over, was suddenly a two-horse race again.

By the end of this afternoon, the extraordinary turnaround in fortunes, given extra propulsion by Arsenal's 3-0 victory over Liverpool last Sunday, could be complete; if Liverpool lose to Nottingham Forest at the City Ground and Arsenal beat Luton Town at Kenilworth Road, the London club will go top on goal average.

It is hardly an improbable sequence of events for a team, who two seasons ago needed to win 2-0 at Anfield on the last day of the season to pip Liverpool for the championship and did so with virtually the last kick of the match. Then again, Arsenal have never won on the Kenilworth Road plastic, which was where they suffered their last league defeat in April, and

Liverpool have not won at the City Ground for five years. George Graham, the Arsenal manager, must decide whether to retain the five-man defence which helped restore the confidence seemingly shattered by Manchester United in the Rumbelows Cup. Or does he go, as he knows he ought, for a more positive outlook. The plastic does tend to favour the brave and this could be Arsenal's last chance to be a winner on it. As of next season they are outlaid.

"The pitch makes the game as hard as playing against Liverpool," Graham said. It will certainly be harder than playing against Liverpool on plastic. Luton beat the Merseysiders, albeit a weakened side, 4-0 in the final of the Guinness Soccer Six.

With Lars Elstrup indulging himself in a new wide role — he took his goal tally into double figures with a quality pair against Forest last week — and just one player, Iain Dowie, playing up the middle, Arsenal could find their five-man defence largely redundant.

Graham could satisfy his own requirements and those of the David O'Leary fan club

by playing a four-man defence with O'Leary sweeping and Lee Dixon pushed into midfield. Either way, Elstrup believed Arsenal would find it tough going, holding on to the only unbeaten record in the first division.

"On our pitch you have to play a close-passing game, delivering the ball to feet, and I don't think that, is their style," he said.

Forest will need to improve somewhat on last week's home draw against Luton if they are, unintentionally, to do Arsenal any favours. Steve Hodge, one of the most influential players, is again unavailable with a calf strain. Steve McMahon, who missed the match at Highbury through injury, is expected to return for a Liverpool side always at its most dangerous on the rebound from defeat. Brian Clough, who has had more success against Liverpool than any other living manager, knows what to expect.

"I have been tackling them as a player and a manager for 35 years and all I know is I am up against the same thing this time as the first time — another tough game," he said.



The world at his feet: Marco van Basten holds off a Milan team-mate in training for the match in Tokyo against Olimpia, of Paraguay, to decide the world club title

O'Neill making things buzz

By WALTER GAMMIE

WYCOMBE Wanderers put on sale 4,200 tickets for today's FA Cup second round tie against Peartree, on Wednesday evening last week. Within two-and-a-quarter hours they had gone.

"We could have filled the ground twice," John Goldsborough, the club secretary, said. "People have been ringing and writing in and a lot have been coming into the ground this week and been quite angry to find out there were no more tickets."

The townspeople have been eager all season to embrace the club and its exciting new ground, Adams Park. The pristine facilities have been matched by sparkling football played under the positive direction of Martin O'Neill, the former Northern Ireland international.

Until Wycombe lost 3-2 to Kidderminster last Saturday, they had been unbeaten at home, drawing average crowds of around 3,000. So it was no wonder that the tickets were snapped up so fast.

Goldsborough praises O'Neill's contribution. He said: "He's made a tremendous impact, his personality is such, and the results he has produced as manager are such, that he's



FA CUP

made a tremendous impression on the club. "He is such a lively character and so bubbly and offers a lot of good commonsense as well as a sense of humour."

"He is one of those managers the crowd see a lot of when he is on the bench, a bit like Kenny Dalglish. He's very animated and I think they feel he's practically one of them and they have accepted him."

O'Neill, who won 64 caps for Northern Ireland and played a leading part in Nottingham Forest's success under Brian Clough, has thrown himself wholeheartedly behind Wycombe's cause.

He suffered rebuffs when trying to gain a job in management in the League but enjoyed two successful years with Grantham, during which he unearthed Gary Crosby, the winger sold to Nottingham Forest, before stepping up to the GM Vauxhall Conference club. O'Neill says his aim is to generate a sense of enjoyment amongst his players. He has unbounded admiration for their

ability. "There are four or five players here who would do well at a League club. Equally, as a full-time manager, he respects the way they combine jobs outside the game with achieving high levels of performance on the field. 'The difficulty is that we don't practice every day, just two nights a week with a game on Saturday. My job as manager is to instil confidence into them.'"

A mark of how well he had done that job was an admission that the defeat by Kidderminster, not helped by an early injury to John Granville, the goalkeeper, might have been a good thing. "Certainly, there was a feeling within the club that all we had to do was put on the jerseys and take three points when we played here."

Tomorrow's task, however, offers different rewards. O'Neill, exuding the freshness that he brought to radio commentary, given up to devote himself to Wycombe, says: "It's like our moment of glory. It's every non-League side's dream to get as far as they can in the Cup, to draw a Liverpool, Tottenham or Arsenal."

"It's as important to us as the players at Everton, say, before a semi-final. We have played an awful lot of games to get here and we should thrive on the occasion."

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scorings of Bath City and Kidderminster Harriers. They are over-enthusiastic to form by Tim Buzaglo, who scored 50 goals last season, but who has been struggling through injury and loss of form, while Merthyr must do without David Webley, their main goalscorer. Webley's replacement, Phil Green, has, however, struck four goals in two matches.

Lee, who won 2-0 at Scarborough in their first appearance in the first round, play Chester City at home with Neil Baker, the manager, saying: "I believe we will be in the third round draw. I have the same instinctive feeling I had before we won at Scarborough."

Paul Clarke, the Hayes forward, whose goal brought the Vauxhall League side a 1-0 win

No deserting Desert Orchid

LAURA THOMPSON

DEar old Brough Scott squinted into the Channel 4 cameras, his gentleman's smile petrified into position by the icy wind. "It's December the first and here we are at Sandown races," he said. His words could not be disputed, indeed strictly speaking they need never have been uttered, but I thought that I knew why Brough was saying them. He felt the way that I did: wintry, a bit Christmassy, just in the mood to wrap up warm in a camel coat and brave a National Hunt meeting.

Most people get excited about images of summer (a jugful of Pimm's, a faecal of strawberries and an earful of Henry Blofeld, naturally). I am susceptible to such evocations but I get equally excited by images of winter (ironing the clothes one is going to wear on Saturday night while listening to the classified football results). Every year, come December, I begin to entertain fantasies about real fires, muffins, glasses of port and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Thus, I knew that this seasonal English occasion, this National Hunt meeting, the first that I had ever attended, would give me a chance to do three things: drink warming brandy; eat a small hip flask which I would carry with me; look through binoculars and pretend to be able to see things; and wear a hat like the one that Nigel Havers wore in *The Chancer*.

The hat was the most important of these. I possessed such a hat, brown, old, rather dashing, and just as I was about to leave for Sandown — with the air of one placing bride and groom figurines on top of a wedding cake — I looked in the mirror and put it on. I stood back from the mirror; I came up close to it. I pulled the hat slightly forward. I tilted it back. I adjusted the brim. I stood back again. From all angles, Eddie Waring was the person that I most reminded myself of. It was no good. The hat would have to go.

A blow for reality having been struck, I arrived, hatless, at Sandown, where the first hat that I saw was John McCrick's. From his television appearances, I had assumed that McCrick would look like a man in a *Punch* cartoon, circa 1880 ("Oo told 'im to place that wagger? — Ay did!"). In fact, with his pink baseball cap, long hair, little glasses, flannel of rings and orange trousers, he looked more like a member of the entourage of some rock band prominent in the late 1960s — perhaps one of Frank Zappa's soundmen. He was standing around the bookmakers, being recognised, gleaming info.

The amount of information that bookmakers can hold in their brains renders me quite bemused. I can tell you the murderer in every single Agatha Christie but that is finite and concrete knowledge. Racing knowledge is never-ending and ultimately requires that one make a subjective judgment (something which, in sport, I am too scared to do), although, of course, the subjective judgment has first to be percolated through a good many opinions. As with those who voted in the Conservative leadership ballot, so with those who place bets: everyone is watching everyone else.

But people who know a lot about racing really do know

a lot about racing. They know how far that horse likes to run; they talked to Jenny Pitman's stable lad on the phone that morning; they have read the *Spurring Life* every day for the last hundred years. What amazes me is that they have time for other things, like breathing. But there they were, just as I had imagined they would be.

Despite the fact that I myself did not present the aspect that I had hoped (hip flask, binoculars, hat), National Hunt was satisfyingly full of people who looked exactly like that (perhaps not the hip flask). Having previously attended dilettante meetings like Royal Ascot, I found the knowledgeable and prosaic sense of purpose invigorating. It would have been even more marked, I suspect, had Desert Orchid not been running that day.

The paddock is marvellously intimate at Sandown and I was concerned about getting close enough to see this horse. Would it be like getting to the front at a Rolling Stones concert, where I arrived three hours early in order to be sure of my place? Desert Orchid's race was at 2.30; perhaps if I got to the paddock at 1.50? Yes, that was really what I did. I missed the 2.0 race, stood there with another lone sentimentalist and awaited the grey horse.

At around 2.15, grown men began toping toward the paddock. They studied their racecards and *Sporting Lives* and pretended that they were there for a bit of a joke — "We'll have a look at the old boy... where is he, then?" As the other four horses gravely described their circles and the air of expectation thickened (just like waiting for Jagger), a man next to me began a soliloquy. "Here he is... he's coming. Here he comes. No, yes... yes. Here he is," and there he was, with his white limbs and great black eyes, and all the people around the paddock began to cheer and applaud.

It is not really so extraordinary that Desert Orchid should have this effect upon people. He is exceptionally beautiful, even for a horse; he appears somehow benignly sentient of his own power; and he races in an uplifting way, running from the front and jumping like a stag.

National Hunt is a down-to-earth sport. It is afterwards that are smoky with cold; it is hardy, phlegmatic spectators; unforgivably, it is sometimes death when horses jump fences that they should not be jumping. Desert Orchid transcends all this; he is the mythical white charger with the human heart who, like all the best sporting personalities, makes his audience feel that he is doing what he does for them.

Yet, unlike most British sporting personalities, he has been wholeheartedly loved for his success. He cannot be loved any more than he is already; which is why his decline is unbearable to contemplate and why men who had backed the winner of the 2.30 were silent as Desert Orchid trailed home fourth, ears still erect.

MOTOR SPORT

Three-man consortium takes control at Lotus

By JOHN BLUNSDEN

THE anticipated restructuring of Team Lotus International before the 1991 season was confirmed yesterday by Tony Rudd the chairman, in a statement released from Ketteringham Hall, the team's Norfolk headquarters.

Under the new arrangements operational control will pass into the hands of a consortium comprising Peter Collins, formerly the team manager for Benetton, Peter Wright, the grand-effects specialist who has been managing director of Lotus Engineering since 1988, and Horst Schuibel, the German team entrant.

For both Collins and Wright it marks a return to the team which they served as assistant team manager and suspension specialist, respectively.

Further details relating to the 1991 season, including the source of new sponsorship, will be revealed shortly, but the team has already announced one of its 1991 drivers. He is Mika Hakkinen, the Finnish driver, aged 22, who recently secured the 1990 British Formula Three championship with the West Surrey Racing team after a season in which he contested 20 races, winning 11 and starting from pole position 13 times. He set 13 fastest race laps.

nine of them establishing new lap records. Hakkinen is the third Finn to graduate into Formula One racing, following the career path of Keke Rosberg, who went on to win the world championship with Williams in 1982, and JJ Lehto, who will be driving for the BMS Dallara team next season.

Hakkinen's team partner has yet to be revealed, but both Johnny Herbert and Bernd Schneider are believed to be on the Lotus team's shortlist.

Although the posts of chief designer, team manager and senior race engineer, made vacant by recent resignations, have apparently all been filled, details of the new team structure will be the subject of a further announcement.

However, it is believed that the new Lotus team will provide the opportunity for Schuibel to renew an old relationship with Enrique Scialabroni, the chassis designer. The widely respected Argentinian was responsible for the Dallara cars which Schuibel ran for Schneider when he won the 1987 German Formula Three championship, and he has since worked on the design staff for both the Williams and Ferrari teams.

Bassett seeks an unusual remedy

By LOUISE TAYLOR

ON THE opening day of the season, the local paper in Sheffield carried interviews with various first-division managers unanimously advising Dave Bassett to "jump ship now".

With the vessel apparently sinking fast, the man at the helm of Sheffield United could be forgiven for wondering if he was right not to heed those warnings. This afternoon, United are poised to equal the League record for the worst start to a season of 16 games without a win, established by Hull City last season.

To escape it, Bassett's team must beat a resurgent Derby County at Bramall Lane. But the Sheffield cynics — who yesterday learnt that the club is £3 million in debt — should note that Hull still managed to avert demotion from the second division in the spring.

Bassett hopes to secure similar security with a little help from a psychiatrist. Simon Merson, Aladdin's lamp and solver of all our problems. It is a matter of seeing if this can help. Bassett said, "Simon is highly recommended. Unless I am open minded about him I am never going to know."

Back on the sunny second Saturday of the new season, Dennis Wise, of Chelsea, was sent off for a foul on Andy Gray, of Crystal Palace, at Selhurst Park. At the time Chelsea were regarded as dark horses for the championship, leaving Palace, who emerged 2-1 winners, rank outsiders. This afternoon they meet again, at Stamford Bridge, with Palace exceeding expectations by standing third to Chelsea's ninth.

Tottenham Hotspur's second match of the season was a 0-0 draw in Sunderland, where Paul Gascoigne was hustled out of the midfield before being pursued by the team bus by a sizeable squad of adoring girls. Such pressures prompted Gascoigne's removal to a Bedfordshire health farm last week in preparation for today's return at Hart Lane. A sub-plot involves Gary Mabbutt, who is included in the England B team to play in Algeria next week, marking Marco Gabbiadini, who surprisingly is not.

The leading second division match pairs West Ham United with Portsmouth at Fratton Park, where the visitors will be out to complete a 20-match unbeaten League sequence.

TODAY'S TEAM NEWS

Barclays League First division
Aston Villa v Man City Daley (eye injury) is doubtful for Villa. Casarino leads the attack in City. City's defence is unchanged. City choose between Dabbe and Cotton, who is fit again, in goal. Allen (chickensoup) is absent. Clark returns to the squad after a loan spell at Shrewsbury.

Luton v Arsenal Hughes has fitness test for Luton this morning. Rees stands by Arsenal must decide whether to retain O'Leary as a sweeper or reintroduce Groves.

Nottingham Forest v Liverpool With Hodge (calf) still absent, Forest are unchanged. McMahon is restored to fitness and returns for Liverpool.

Everton v Coventry Everton recall Watson and Milligan, but omit Alexander. Gynn (ankle) faces a late fitness test for Coventry, who could recall Drinkell to the attack.

Man Utd v Leeds Utd Webb replaces injured line for United. Strachan returns from injury, but Robson does not. Sharpe is fit to resume. Leeds are unchanged.

Norwich v Southampton Rosario is fit to play his first game for Norwich since September, replacing Power in the attack, but Fleck (knee) is missing. Dodd is fit to resume in the Southampton defence at the expense of Charnock. There is still no place for Rod Wallace.

Sheff Utd v Derby United select from 17. Mickie White (calf) faces a late fitness test for Derby. Davidson joins the squad.

Wimbledon v QPR Barnett is back in the Wimbledon squad. QPR welcome Falco after injury but Parker, McDonald, Farnham and Ham, who are still unfit. On-loan Casar continues in defence.

Tottenham v Sunderland If Seagley (knee) passes a fitness test, Tottenham will field the side which drew 0-0 at Roker Park in August. Van den Heuvel, Thomas of Tulse will deputise. Sunderland are unchanged for the fourth successive time.

Second division
Leicester v Oldham Wijn Pooley (stomach) and James (knee) unfit. Leicester recall Spearing and Hill. Oldham replace Adams with Holden.

Middlesbrough v West Brom Phillips (ankle) faces a late test for Boro. West Brom are without Bradley (knee). Hodson deputises at right back. McNulty (hamstring), and Goodman (calf) await fitness tests, but Sprodder has recovered from food poisoning.

Portsmouth v West Ham Axford continues in central defence for Portsmouth. Dicks (knee) is still absent for West Ham, who are also without Keen (hamstring). Gale returns to the squad.

Scorers Bath City and Kidderminster Harriers. They are over-enthusiastic to form by Tim Buzaglo, who scored 50 goals last season, but who has been struggling through injury and loss of form, while Merthyr must do without David Webley, their main goalscorer. Webley's replacement, Phil Green, has, however, struck four goals in two matches.

Lee, who won 2-0 at Scarborough in their first appearance in the first round, play Chester City at home with Neil Baker, the manager, saying: "I believe we will be in the third round draw. I have the same instinctive feeling I had before we won at Scarborough."

Paul Clarke, the Hayes forward, whose goal brought the Vauxhall League side a 1-0 win

over Cardiff City in a first round replay returns to Bourne with a point to prove. He failed to make it as a professional after a run in the youth side.

Injuries have plagued the preparations of Barnet, the second-placed side in the GM Vauxhall Conference, before their home match with Northampton Town, the fourth division leaders. Hakan Hayrettin comes into the side for Wayne Turner.

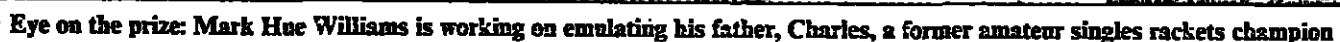
Brian Hall has returned to manager Weststone after the Benzer Homes League club parted with Alan Gane.

Folkestone Town have been shut down by the Benzer Homes League for the second time this season and been given a fortnight to pay money which they owe the liquidator.

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

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IAN STEWART



By Sally Jones

HURDLE

HURDLE

By GERALD DAVIES

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By STEVE ACTESON

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FROM MALCOLM McKEAG, IN ST THOMAS, US VIRGIN ISLANDS

By BARRY PICKTHALL

FROM JENNY MACARTHUR IN BORDEAUX

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MASSIMILIANO Duran, of Italy, defends his WBC cruiserweight boxing title against Anacleto Wamba, of France, here today.

Duran, who won the crown after the eleventh-round disqualification of Carlos De Leon, said: "I want to prove against Wamba that I deserve this title."

which meant it could apply to set up a national committee.

100-4208

Nick Brown and Jeremy Bates won the doubles, but lost their singles matches.

Year	Percent
1990	65
1995	75
2000	70
2005	90

development under their main
stand which includes separate
police detention centres for
home and away supporters.

100-4-202

The race is on to find a winner



THE Times today presents the opportunity for a reader and a companion to enjoy a luxury visit to two of the most enjoyable days of the racing calendar - the Rank Holiday Festival at Kempton Park on December 28 and 29.

We have linked with Rank, the sponsor of the two-day meeting, to provide this programme of holiday entertainment. They will join Richard Pithers, the television commentator at the Royal Garden Hotel, Kensington, on the morning of Boxing Day for a reception before being driven to Kempton Park for lunch and full members' tickets for a grandstand view of the afternoon's racing, including the King George VI Rank Stakes (with Desert Orchid possibly in the field).

After racing, they will return to the Royal Garden for a cocktail party and buffet hosted by Pitman before going on to a West End show (our winner can select from *Miss Saigon*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Misérables* and *Aspects of Love*).

Following an overnight stay and breakfast at the five-star Royal Garden Hotel, our winner will be driven to Kempton for lunch and another afternoon of high-class racing.

To enter the competition, study the questions below, complete the entry form, and send it to: Rank Holiday Festival, Sports Department, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9AN, to arrive by Friday, December 14.

The winner will be the sender of the first correct entry drawn from those received by that date.

THE QUESTIONS

- How many times has Desert Orchid won the King George VI Chase?



- Name the winning rider (above) of Nipsala in the 1987 King George?
- Who is Desert Orchid's sire?
- How many occasions has the Dickinson family trained the winner of the King George?
- How many times did Richard Pitman win the King George as a jockey?

ENTRY FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

ANSWERS

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Employees (and their relatives) of Times Newspapers Ltd, Rank or its agents are not eligible for entry. The Sports Editor's decision is final. No correspondence.

CYCLING

Doyle changes event for title defence

TONY Doyle switches from six-day racing tonight to defend his European 50-kilometre madison championship on the 200 metre track at Grenoble where victory would give him a third successive title (Peter Bryan writes).

In the absence of his regular partner, Danny Clark, Doyle is paired with Pier-Angelo Baccotto, of Italy.

"He's a competent six-day rider," Doyle said, "and I believe that we can make a partnership that will put the pressure on everybody else."

Sinclair lives in Grenoble and will be keen to perform well in front of his "home" crowd. The championship counts towards the new winter international points competition which also includes six-day results. Doyle is top of the table with victory in the Munich race, a second at Bordeaux and two fourth places and two fifth positions.

He has a training programme in Florida before competing in Dortmund on Boxing Day and the last six-day events in Cologne, Bremen, Stuttgart, Antwerp and lastly Copenhagen from February 1 to 6.

The handicap of a selling plate outlook

In the light of the Bank of Ireland's sudden reversal of its decision to sponsor the 1991 Champion Hurdle, coupled with Sears and Brooke Bond Oxo's withdrawal of financial support, it might appear that the racing industry has problems beyond the Zetland report and the Aga Khan's exit. Are there about to be a mass of redundancies, fewer horses in training and fewer race meetings?

Without sponsors, racing would barely survive. More than £7 million of the £22 million prize-money in 1990 was put up by the commercial sector - which, as Barrie Gill, a sponsorship consultant, pointed out at a racing industry seminar at Sandown Park this year, is less than the cost of sponsoring one Formula One motor racing car for one season.

The key point is that cars race all over the world, while the historic insularity of British racing (in terms of attracting overseas owners and their horses) has always put off some major international brands from looking at our domestic racing with a view to spending part of their global marketing in sponsoring major races.

The paradox is that, particularly on the Flat, the Jockey Club and individual racecourses have, via the pattern system, a number of races which should be of international status, yet they manage to secure only a runner or two from France. An entry from Italy, Germany, the United States or Australia is a news event in itself.

The consequence is that a group one event, like the Sussex Stakes, run over a mile at the Glorious Goodwood meeting, has to offer prize-money around £250,000. For seven years, Robert Sangster, via his Swettenham Stud, invested £750,000 in order to maintain the value of the race. In 1989, having seen most of his money end up in the pockets of his great rivals, the Arabs, he decided to cash his in. Not surprisingly, a new sponsor proved elusive to find and has continued to be so.

Rod Fabricius, the clerk of the course at Goodwood, admits he faces an increasingly difficult task in 1991. "There is no doubt that by having to call the race 'The XYZ Sussex Stakes' we are disadvantaged," he said. "The title has a parochial ring to it, and when compared to other high-profile sponsorships, £200,000 does seem a lot to spend on just one race."

It certainly does. Whitbread spends half that sum in allocating prize-money towards the Mackeson Gold Cup and the Whitbread Gold Cup, the bookends of the National Hunt season.

Paul Vaughan, the sponsorship director of Whitbread, has carefully rationalised his allocated racing budget. "Whitbread is fortunate, in one respect, in that we have, through historical reasons, two terrific properties," he said. "Although Mackeson is still the market leader in the sweet stout market, that market has declined dramatically since the 1960s."

The Zetland report and the withdrawal of the Aga Khan from Britain are the most recent blows to the troubled racing industry. Nick Stewart looks at a sport accused of failing to realise its commercial potential at a time of recession

"Our day at Cheltenham is the only real marketing support Mackeson now receives, and we have increased our sponsorship with the introduction of other beers in our range taking on other races on the card."

Vaughan is aware that National Hunt racing offers infinitely better value to a commercial sponsor than the Flat. "I looked at possibly sponsoring the St Leger last year, but declined, on the grounds that the handle, St Leger, was too prominent, and our name would often be left off," he said.

But how would he feel if the race were named the "Whitbread Classic"? "Yes, well, I would have to consider it, but it won't happen," he said. "It may have to, since research suggests that racing has lagged behind other major domestic sports in not realising its potential in the business world."

Ian Pithers, the marketing director of the Racecourse Association (RCA), the trade association for all 59 racecourses, is adamant that "the past 40 years of neglect is going to have a serious effect in the next few years. We have to offer not only the owner but particularly the racegoer better facilities."

"The extra money from SIS is helping towards this, but asking sponsors for large sums of money to attach their name to traditionally awkwardly titled races which cannot really deliver a return, is going to become a real problem."

Pithers has no brief to sell sponsorships, but the RCA backs up the efforts of the individual racecourses with a brochure on sponsorship, and a newcomer's guide to racing. Although most other major sports in Britain have marketing departments, racing has no central marketing base from which to sell the sport.

David Donald, the sponsorship racing consultant for Seagram and Whitbread, does not see that this is necessary. "Each course has its own needs, and companies who are interested in sponsoring also have particular requirements. It is a question of matching the sponsor's need to the right course, race and hospitality requirements. The racecourse managers are pretty good at promoting their own days and key events."

They are also prepared to spend large sums to attract sponsors. Fabricius spent £50,000 in marketing alone to sell the Sussex Stakes during 1990. He is now in "meaningful dialogue with an international company".

For all the problems that certain courses may have with difficult races in the pattern on the Flat, the forecast for sponsorship overall in racing does not appear all that gloomy.

Edward Gillespie, at Cheltenham, received many enquiries for the Champion Hurdle after the Bank of Ireland pulled out. Sandown Park replaced the Sears group, sponsors of its Spring Bank Holiday meeting, with a new face to racing, the UB group, which increased the sponsorship total.

At the Gimcrack dinner on Tuesday, Lord Hartington, the senior steward at the Jockey Club, will make what will hopefully prove a keynote speech, projecting the short and long-term future of the industry.

He must be aware of the discrepancy that exists in the minds of the business community between National Hunt and Flat racing, in terms of perceived value in sponsorship terms. And yet it is the outwardly-rich relative, Flat racing, which now seeks support from outside its own resources.

The answer to this particular problem is quickly identified. The pattern system has to be overhauled. This need not be to the detriment of the quality, but would encourage exclusivity and therefore more international involvement at the top level. In addition, there are 1,150 racing fixtures in Britain, none of them run on Sundays. The bet-

ting shops cannot open for evening meetings, so during the summer, midweek racing takes place during the afternoon when most racegoers are at work.

Racing in the 1990s has much to offer both the potential sponsor and the racegoer. In the main, the courses are run by sensible, entrepreneurial managers, who in some cases operate "with one hand tied behind our backs", as one senior member commented. After all, it is they who see the crowds, the large fields for the innovative race or meeting, and it is they who have seen the changing face of commercial business when married to sport.

A few companies have felt the recession and have withdrawn; some contracts with particular races, which have achieved their aim, have ended.

Peter O'Sullivan, the BBC racing commentator, when asked if sponsorship and racing were beginning to fall out of bed: "The suggestion that sponsorship in racing is withering is unwarranted, inaccurate and from the point of view of the sport, unhelpful."

The key word is unhelpful. While certain courses enjoy fruitful partnerships with sponsors, there is, however, concern both inside and outside the industry that the future for certain types of races is clouded with difficulty. Racing's authorities need to address this area in bold and imaginative terms.

© Nick Stewart is the business development director for Michael Humphreys and Partners, a sports marketing agency.

Llewellyn rides luck on late Gifford booking

By RICHARD EVANS

LADY Luck rivals the form book when it comes to winning and losing at the racing game. Aske Carl Llewellyn, who won the Wantage-based jockey did not have a ride in the opening race at Cheltenham yesterday until heavy traffic prevented Richard Rowe reaching the course in time to ride Bignor Hill. Llewellyn stepped into the breach and duly scored on the Josh Gifford-trained horse.

The victory was his sixth in the last ten days, a start in contrast to his dismal fortunes over the past ten months. A bad fall on Ben Head at Cheltenham in February was the start of the bad times when luck deserted him. Hepatitis was diagnosed a few days later.

On his return to the saddle in March, he broke bones above his ankle after a fall from Suncia at Market Rasen. He was sidelined until the end of August and on his second ride back, dislocated an elbow while riding Dromina Star. Llewellyn, aged 25, began his third comeback of the year three weeks ago and, after a quiet start

while he regained race fitness and confidence, the tide turned. Today at Towcester, he rides Cone Glen who provided him with his first winner on November 27.

"It is luck. I never thought it was fate. I picked up a winner today through luck. You can fall in front of 20 horses and get up and walk away one day; another time you fall, nothing kicks you but you break a bone. It is just luck."

John Kavanagh, aged 22, has also learnt about the highs and lows of National Hunt racing in England since moving to Lambourn from Ireland in August. On his first ride in this country, at Southwell on October 13, he got no further than the first fence and ended up very dazed following his fall.

Yesterday, he tasted Cheltenham glory in the day's feature race, the Food Brokers Fishermen's Friend Chase. Master Bob has always been a rather mercurial character, whom Nicky Henderson believed benefited from being held up. The Lambourn trainer took a risk yesterday and suggested the

young Irish jockey should lead from the front if there was not a strong force early on in the £10,000 race.

The change of tactics transformed Master Bob and the partnership never looked like being caught. Having finished second to Arctic Call in the Hennessy, Timofeyev may have to revise his opinion that Master Bob "isn't one to trust" and remove his squiggle.

Trevor Hallett only has ten horses at his Salsbury yard in west Cornwall but Turnberry Dawn is proving to be a trail-blazer for the small trainer. Having won on the second day of the season, the former Irish point-to-point winner recorded his sixth victory from ten starts in the BMW Senior Flat Chase.

The race was won and lost at the sixteenth fence when the long-time leader, Oketeer, unseated his rider, Topsham Bay, the evening favourite, also made a bad mistake, leaving Turnberry Dawn clear to gain an invaluable lead.

No holidays are in prospect for Hopscotch, who recorded her eighth win from nine starts in the Charlton Kings Thoroughbred Novices' Hurdle. The pony-sized filly has proved a bargain for Martin Pipe since being bought at the Ascot sales for £11,400 in April.

David Barons continued the success of West Country trainers when South Pool put in a better jump than Royal Cracker at the last fence to win the Kington Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Chase.

Racing next week

MONDAY: Epsom, Warwick.

TUESDAY: Sedgemoor, Plumpton.

WEDNESDAY: Haydock Park, Worcester.

THURSDAY: Haydock Park, Southwell (AW).

FRIDAY: Catterick Bridge, Hereford.

SATURDAY: Ascot, Nottingham, Edinburgh, Lingfield Park.

Flat meetings in bold



Hopscotch (Jonathan Lower, right) mastering Access Sun (Richard Danvoody) at Cheltenham yesterday

Advocating firm policing of stable hygiene standards

RESPONDING to criticism of standards of racecourse stable hygiene, Stanley Jackson, managing director of the Racecourse Association, yesterday said: "I have visited the stable yards at 50 member courses in the past 15 months and there is nothing basically wrong with racecourse stable hygiene. Firm policing by the Jockey Club of the present instruction would ensure that the standards are maintained."

"The RCA is the only organisation that has costed the changes that are being proposed and, frankly, they are horrendous and could not be borne by the courses, particularly the smaller

RUGBY LEAGUE

Advantage favours Widnes

By KEITH MACKLIN

IT IS an unfortunate result of the luck of the draw that Widnes and Leeds play each other in the second round of the Rugby Trophy at Naughton Park this afternoon.

The match has aroused considerable annoyance in Widnes because it will be a repeat of the 1987 final, which means that Widnes will have appeared on the small screen four times in the past five weeks. The compensation payment of £2,000 from the League has not placated Widnes, who would have anticipated a crowd of around 14,000 and much higher takings had the match been played with the other ties tomorrow.

However, the BBC cannot be blamed for selecting it, since it is the outstanding tie of the round. Widnes, with home advantage, should go through, but the mercurial Leeds side is puffed

with internationals. The New Zealanders, John Gallagher, is improving every week, and a purring machine, a real boost to Leeds, who have been too often the bridesmaids in recent trophy competitions.

Featherstone Rovers, the famed giant-killers, will anticipate taking the scalp of St Helens at Post Office Road, particularly since they are strengthened by the return after injury of Bibb Clark and Graydon St Helens will have their international centre, Loughlin, back in action, and the forward, Forber, is available after being cleared of an alleged high tackle by the disciplinary committee.

There is a traditional derby at Castleford, where the vastly-improved Wakefield Trinity are the visitors, and this match could go either way.

At first glance the tie at Odsal should be one-way traffic by Bradford Northern to the Bramley line. However, Bradford's penalty goal of losing to the second-division club, Workington Town, last week, and lowly Bramley fancy their chance, but they are going for a win. The captain, Andy Timson, said:

Doncaster, who play Rochdale Hornets, have the best chance of a second-division club of overturning a first-division side, but Eadley and the near-bankrupt Leigh will almost certainly go out against Oldham and Warrington respectively. Wigan, the holders, will surely have no difficulty running up a sizeable score against Keighley.

STUDENT SPORT

Colleges score rare win

By MIKE LAMB

THE British Colleges rugby league side recorded its first win over the Universities Athletic Union (U.A.U.), at Salford, though the 27-2 scoreline did not reflect the closeness of play.

The success of the colleges was built around their playmakers, Andy Rice, Ian Simpson and Mark Calvey, of West London, the captain, who continually brought their big and mobile forwards into the game at pace, opening gaps for centres Rick Hodson, of North Cheshire, and Sean Forward, of Bedford.

Chris Caws, of Bedford, played a classic loose-forward game in attack and defence and Ian Kryztofiak, of West London, the man of the match, gave a formidable performance, consistently breaking down the defence.

The U.A.U. had a number of near misses but could never quite make the breakthrough against a colleges side that tackled and covered magnificently.

● The British students (BSSF) boxing championships, take place tomorrow at Bath University, with Andrew McGann, of Portsmouth Polytechnic, defending his light-welterweight title. Elliott Gualandrea, of Oxford University, who won at featherweight last year, moves up to lightweight.

● Reining polytechnic men's hockey champions, Thames, beat Kingston 4-1 on Wednesday to reach this year's quarter-final. Sheffield trounced Sunderland 6-0.

DRAW: Quarter-finals: Leeds v Staffordshire; Portsmouth v Harrogate; Thames v Oxford; South View v Sheffield v Liverpool.

HOCKEY

Faulkner is ready to return

By SYDNEY FRISKIN

DAVID Faulkner, who recently returned from Melbourne with a shoulder injury, has been responding well to treatment at Bournemouth FC and could still play for Havant this weekend in the Poundstretcher National League, according to the team manager, Dave Whittle.

"David had a good report after his last visit to the physiotherapist and there is more than an even chance that he will play, possibly on Sunday, though not at full back where we have a settled situation," Whittle said. Colin Cooper, who played last week against Isca, has had a recurrence of ankle trouble and is extremely doubtful for the matches against St Albans today and Slough tomorrow.

The leaders, Indiana Gymkhana, could be overhauled by both Havant and Hounslow even if they win their away match against Neston tomorrow. Both their rivals have two home matches which could

bring them six points, in which case Havant will hold a one point advantage over Hounslow, who face Teddington today and Isca tomorrow with no injury problems.

Bromley, after recent victories over East Brinsford and Stourport, will be handicapped by the absence of Cross, who has a back injury, for away matches against Southgate and Welton. Southgate, fourth from the bottom of the table but not expecting to stay there, will be without Kerry who has gone to Malaysia to play for Europe in the inter-continental tournament. But they are expected to have an easy win tomorrow against Wakefield. St Albans, going through a testing time, will travel on from Havant for their game against East Grinstead tomorrow at Horsham.

The northern challenge in the first division has faded with Neston tenth and Wakefield and Welton at the bottom. Welton

have gone six matches without a point, which is surprising with such outstanding players as Stamp, Wake, Sheardown and Moat in the side. They face a formidable task at home tomorrow against Bromley.

In tomorrow's second division matches the leaders, Cambridge City, might not have matters all their own way against Guildford at Cranleigh School while Doncaster can expect a tough game at Southampton against Trojans, who in timid days made life uncomfortable for the leaders with Paul Tubbs and Michael Aspin in splendid form.

Surbiton, with eight successive victories in the Pizza Express London League, are expected to take full points from Enley today and stay on top. In nine matches they have scored 50 goals. Molloy has contributed 17 of them. Jolly 14 and Francis ten.

JUDO

Brown seeks old place in the sun

KERRITH Brown, banned for two years after being tested positive for drugs at the Olympic Games in Seoul, sets out to complete his comeback today by winning the British championship at Crystal Palace, London - and thereby accumulating sufficient ranking points to win a place, as a humble No. 4 light-middleweight, on the national squad (Nicolas Soames writes).

But that is all he needs to return to the international circuit. With the European championships and the world championships next year, it is well timed.

Brown is aware, however, it is not as simple as that. For the last two years he has been in opposition from within the British judo and Olympic movement. "I know there are people who do not want me to come back. But I have been away for two years and now I just want to compete again to the best of my ability."

After his extraordinary performance in the Fox's Masters in Wolverhampton last month, when he won his own category and also the light-heavyweight, Ruy Stevens, from Japan, could give the plum events to Southby, and simply ignore Brown despite his obvious talents.

Only David Southby, the Commonwealth Games champion, and formally ranked No. 1, could possibly stop Brown gaining the maximum ranking points he needs. But Southby, who lost to Brown in Wolverhampton, is not competing because he has enough ranking points.

If Brown makes the squad as No. 4, he will not be guaranteed competitions abroad. Arthur Mapp, the British men's team manager, could give the plum events to Southby, and simply ignore Brown despite his obvious talents.

Executive Editor
David BrewertonWickes
reworks
loan
deals

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

WICKES, the timber and do-it-yourself group, has renegotiated its loan agreements with its bankers to avoid breaching the covenants on interest cover. The group, whose shares have fallen from more than 120p in October to 66p, has gearing estimated at 275 per cent and interest cover of less than two times.

Henry Sweetbaum, the group's chairman and chief executive, said that Wickes had not actually breached any covenants but had been in danger of doing so. "We took the necessary action to avoid that," he said. Some £110 million of debt has been repaid over the past two years and the debt repayment schedule remains unchanged.

Mr Sweetbaum revealed that trading had deteriorated and the group would not make a profit in the second half. The first-half pre-tax profit was £6.09 million. Analysts had been expecting profits of up to £16 million for the full year. Neil Currie and Tony Shire at Laing & Cuckinbank have highlighted the problems at Hunter Timber and downgraded twice in recent months to £12 million for the year, but said that that estimate looked too high in the light of the trading statement from Wickes.

Mr Sweetbaum said the United Kingdom market for timber products had deteriorated further since September. "The group's Hunter Timber and Marden Timber subsidiaries have accelerated their rationalisation and cost reduction programmes. Although this action should materially improve the trading position of these businesses in 1991, Hunter Timber will now make a loss for 1990 and as a result the Wickes Group is not expected to be profitable during the second half," he said.

He added that the Wickes retail business continues to trade well and is showing like-for-like growth in its UK stores. The retail profits will be ahead in 1990.

Wickes bought Hunter from Hilldown Holdings for £283 million in September 1988. The deal appeared to make a lot of sense for the group but in retrospect the timing could not have been worse. Hunter's main customers are the housebuilders who are suffering badly in the recession.

Fed eases US
rates on fears
over recession

By GEORGE SIVELL, LONDON, and SUSAN ELLICOTT, WASHINGTON

THE Federal Reserve, America's central bank, eased interest rates slightly yesterday after an increase in unemployment to a three-year high raised fears that the recession there will be deeper than the expected short sharp shock.

In London, the Bank of England issued, for the third consecutive Friday, a signal to the money markets that base rates must remain at 14 per cent for the next two weeks.

Dealers at the Federal Reserve signalled an easing by injecting \$1.5 billion of funds at 7.25 per cent, an effective cut in the federal funds rate from 7.5 per cent. There was still uncertainty whether the Fed would move quickly to

lower the discount rate, another key rate, which is now at 7 per cent.

The discount rate the Fed charges on loans to banks has not been changed since February 24, 1989, when it was raised by ½ point. Just before the move, American authorities revealed that the November unemployment rate rose to 5.9 per cent, the highest since October 1987, from 5.7 per cent in October.

American non-farm payroll jobs fell by 267,000 in November, against a 75,000 drop expected by economists. The jobs report gives the first comprehensive look at the economy in November and is the first indication of whether the downturn that began in October has continued.

The dollar fell after the job

figures were released and at lunchtime in New York stood at \$1.9480 against the pound, down from \$1.9375.

Foreign exchange dealers say the dollar has also lost some of its "safe-haven" status after the moves towards peace in the Gulf. The Fed easing failed to help American shares and the Dow Jones Industrial average fell 13.37 to 2,589.11 on fears of a deeper than expected recession.

Economists were shaken by the fall in employment. The October figure was revised down to 178,000 from 78,000 previously estimated. Janet Norwood, a commissioner for the Bureau of Labour Statistics, said the figures showed "a substantial and widespread over-the-month deterioration" in the job market.

Alan Greenspan, the Fed chairman, told Congress last week the American economy was in a "meaningful downturn" in October and November. Michael Boskin, the White House chief economic adviser, this week said he expected four-quarter gross national product to indicate a shrinking economy, but he forecast an upturn after the first half of next year.

The Southwest Bank of St Louis, a small American bank, cut its prime rate immediately after the job figures were announced. Its rate came down to 9.75 per cent from 10 per cent. First Fidelity Bank, followed, suggesting others may do so. If they do, it will be the first benchmark rate since January 8.

As the pound came under pressure, the Bank of England announced that for the third Friday in a row it was leading to the money market at 14 per cent for the next fortnight. The amount was £985 million.

The pound had a difficult day against the mark, closing just over half a pence lower at DM2.8821, reducing the scope for an early interest rate cut. On its trade-weighted index, the pound shed 0.1 to end at 93.5. In the money market, interbank interest rates eased by up to ½ in thin trading, with the key three-month rate closing at 13½-¾ per cent.

UK retains hard
line against Emu

By ANATOLE KALETSKY, ECONOMICS EDITOR

A GROUP of northern European countries will probably move ahead of the rest of Europe towards a tighter monetary union, British and German officials have suggested.

Britain, however, will not alter its fundamental opposition to European Monetary Union at the intergovernmental conference (IGC) which begins in Rome next Saturday.

Although Britain's opposition to Emu led indirectly to Margaret Thatcher's removal as prime minister, Whitehall officials said yesterday that the government saw no reason to modify the positions staked out by Mrs Thatcher at the October summit.

These views, which were rejected by the other 11 members of the European Community, offered a good basis for continuing negotiations over Emu and would not lead to Britain's isolation at the IGC, the officials said.

But they acknowledged that a group of non-inflationary members in northern Europe

may move ahead soon towards a tighter monetary co-operation, leaving the other members of the European Monetary System, including Britain, lagging behind.

Horst Koehler, the German finance secretary, said two-speed progress towards Emu would probably prove necessary since some countries would need longer than others to prepare for the disciplines of fixed exchange rates. British officials said they would have no objections to this, provided that a framework of Emu was agreed by all.

British officials believe they will not be isolated partly because little progress is likely for many months on any of the concrete issues of monetary union. The IGC delegates, who will meet monthly, are expected to talk inconclusively for most of next year, giving Britain time to consider fundamental changes in its position.

Meanwhile, supporters of Britain's gradualist approach to Emu are likely to emerge, officials believe.

LVMH expands champagne
operations with Fr3bn deal

By OUR CITY STAFF

THE luxury goods company LVMH-Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton is paying Fr3.1 billion for Pommery et Lanson, the champagne business owned by BSN, the French food manufacturer.

LVMH, which is 24 per cent owned by Guinness, owns Moët et Chandon and Veuve Clicquot champagnes, and will add two leading international brands to its range. Its share of the world champagne market will grow from 19 per cent to 24 per cent.

The two firms said in a joint

statement that the move fits in with their strategies. LVMH reported an operating profit of Fr1.24 billion in its champagne activities in 1989, including the Moët et Chandon, Mercier and Veuve Clicquot brands, out of Fr3.67 billion for the whole group.

Earlier this year, LVMH increased its stake in Guinness to 24 per cent, the same level as Guinness's consolidated interest in LVMH. Guinness shares closed 15p higher at 778p.

Bernard Arnault, the

LVMH chairman, said the purchase price includes the acquisition of Pommery et Lanson's stock of about 50 million bottles of champagne. He put no value on the stocks.

BSN intends to concentrate on food products with large consumer markets, mainly in Europe. Antoine Riboud, the chairman, said he had decided to sell the champagne business because it was not central to BSN's operations and was not a market leader.

Analysts said the deal would help BSN to reduce its debt and bring LVMH a stronger share of the champagne business.

LVMH, which also controls the Christian Dior and Givenchy fashion houses, raised Fr5 billion last month to refund its stake in Guinness. The company will have a higher debt-to-equity ratio as a result of the deal.

BSN became the third largest champagne producer after it bought Pommery et Lanson in 1984. The company produces 13 million bottles last year, of which two-thirds were exported. Its champagne activities had a turnover of just over Fr1 billion in 1989.

Walker director goes



SIR Anthony Jolliffe, left, has resigned as a non-executive director of Breat Walker, the debt-laden leisure group. The group expects to announce shortly the appointment of additional non-executive directors as well as the appointment of a finance director.

Wilfred Aquilina resigned as the finance director this week but he will be retained by the Breat Walker Group as a consultant.

Stars cloud results at Chrysalis

By MARTIN WALLER

CHRYSLIS Group, the record and media company, has reported a poor set of full-year results, exacerbated by problems with some of its top stars.

The company inched to a £5,000 pre-tax profit in the 12 months to end-August, against losses of £11.5 million last year.

The full-year dividend is being held at 4p, with a 2p final payment.

Among the events of the past 12 months that the board would rather forget are:

● The motorcycle accident of its former top-selling singer, Billy Idol, whose image precluded the wearing of a crash helmet, shortly before an important album release.

● The refusal of Idol's replacement at the top of Chrysalis's corporate tree, Sinead O'Connor, to allow the American national anthem to be played at a concert in America. Sales of her best-selling album *I Do Not Want What I Have Not Got* subsequently plummeted amid the patriotic fervor that followed the invasion of Kuwait.

● Allegations made by Ms O'Connor

that the Chrysalis management tried to pressure her into having an abortion for financial reasons.

● The embarrassing discovery that the chart-topping duo, Milli Vanilli, had neglected to play or sing on any of their records.

Chrysalis, whose record business is now jointly owned with Thorn EMI, turned in an operating profit for the year of £1.78 million, compared with a £12.5 million loss last year, but then lost £1.78 million from the effects of exchange rate fluctuations on its dollar deposits.

The company was hit by another £1.27 million in extraordinary items, mainly provisions against money it now may not receive from the sale to Thorn EMI. While the British record business contributed a £3.4 trading million profit, Chrysalis's share of the American business lost £1.6 million.

Asked when the American division would finally come into profit, Chris Wright, the Chrysalis chairman, answered: "Not this year, possibly next year, certainly the year after."

Chrysalis has been keen to build up its non-record activities. It has signed a £10

million joint venture with Pioneer Electronic Corporation of Japan to create a recording studio at Lyndhurst Hall, a Grade II listed building it owns in Hampstead, London, and a £1 million agreement to form a television and film production company.

It has made a foray into the radio industry, with a 20 per cent stake in Metro Radio, and Mr Wright nurses designs to invest in a consortium bidding for an independent television franchise.

He could not quantify the effect on profits of the O'Connor furore, which resulted in her records being banned by several American radio stations, but admitted that eventual sales had been far worse than expected.

The listening public can look forward to a last record from Milli Vanilli, whoever they may actually be. "It does feature the two boys, Rod and Fab," said Mr Wright. "On the front of it," he admitted.

Obviously for the two, who were the ones who came clean with the news, he added: "Milli Vanilli after that will be dead property."

Wolverhampton & Dudley drinks to a buoyant 1991

DES JENSON



Better results brewing: David Thompson, the managing director, yesterday

Brewery held back
to profit
of £31.8m

By JONATHAN PRYNN

HIGHER interest charges and lower property earnings have held back pre-tax profits to £31.8 million, a 4 per cent increase on last year, at Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, the black country beer group.

Nevertheless, Edwin Thompson, the chairman, painted a buoyant picture of the company's prospects for 1991. "We have a robust balance sheet, a sound investment programme, good retail outlets and vigorous brands... We believe that 1991 will see more satisfactory growth across all areas of our business," he said.

Turnover, which totalled £171.4 million for the year to end-September, grew by 9.7 per cent in the second half compared with 7 per cent in the first six months. However, the buoyant sales growth resulted in a 56.3 per cent increase in borrowing costs to £4.8 million. Year-end borrowings of £36.5 million give a gearing ratio of 15.6 per cent, said David Thompson, the managing director.

Earnings per share increased 16.1 per cent to 36p and a final 5.6p dividend increased the total payout by 13.4 per cent to 9.3p. The company predicted that total dividend for the current year "should not be less than 10p", a 7.5 per cent increase. The dividend is covered four times.

Beer sales showed volume growth in all categories, with Kronenbourg up 13 per cent, Harp up 7 per cent and non-and low-alcohol beers increasing by 16 per cent. In the ales sector, the Banks's and Hanson's brands increased market share and margins. Wolverhampton & Dudley has about 20 per cent of the ales market in the Central TV region.

The weak property market meant fewer property sales during the year, with property profits falling from £1.3 million to £402,000.

Chloride Group passes payout as
profits slip to £4.4m at half time

By OUR CITY STAFF

FLUCTUATING exchange rates, difficult trading conditions and the effects of the Gulf combined to push pre-tax profits at Chloride Group, the battery maker, back from £5 million to £4.4 million in the six months to end-September.

There is again no dividend, but the board is promising a capital reorganisation, which could allow payments to be resumed "in the near future".

However, Roger Holmes, the director of corporate operations, was unable to say whether a payout could be expected at the end of this financial year or what precise timescale the company had envisaged.

Shareholders were prom-



Ray Horrocks: warning issued that the strategic review of the group, foreshadowed in the latest report and accounts, was nearing completion and

would be published by the end of March.

"The outcome, which will reflect the priority which the board attaches to reducing borrowings and costs in today's increasingly difficult economic climate, will be announced shortly," said Ray Horrocks, the chairman.

"All options are open," said Mr Holmes - including disposals.

The worst hit business was the international division, where operating profits fell from £6.4 million to £4.7 million.

Electronics was unchanged at £3.5 million, and Mr Horrocks gave warning that prospects for the second half could be influenced by uncertain market conditions, while the industrial division

rose from £600,000 to £3.2 million.

After exceptional items of £1.3 million from two relocations, operating profits were down from £9.8 million to £8 million following the non-recurrence of £1.9 million of profits last time from discontinued operations.

The income from those disposals helped cut interest payments from £5.2 million to £3.7 million. Chloride refuses to reveal its borrowings at the half-way stage, but it is likely, given seasonal trends in the business, that they are higher than the £32 million noted in the last accounts.

Changing currency rates cut profits by £1.7 million, Mr Horrocks said. The shares edged ahead 2p to 17p from their low point of the year.

A power of disappointment for stags

By MARTIN WALLER

STAGS look like being left out in the cold in the electricity float, where the number of applications has now passed the 8 million mark, and only those applying for a small number of shares in their own regional distribution company are certain to get their full entitlement.

Counting at the receiving banks is continuing until tomorrow, with the final allocations to be announced on Monday. Sources close to the float said the eventual share-out would be heavily weighted in favour of the customer and

the smaller investor. There is unlikely to be a ballot to rule out investors by lot.

The eventual total of applications could top 12 million, with the total number of people applying for the shares likely to be between 5 million and 6 million. While only about one in five have gone for shares in more than one company, a significant number have gone for all 12.

The most likely outcome is that the float will be about seven to eight times the subscribed, not excessive by the standards of some private

company flotations such as Sock Shop but way ahead of any previous privatisation.

If so, any investor who has applied for £2,000 worth of shares in any company will probably get nothing, as in some areas will those putting in £1,000. Those who have applied for fewer will probably be heavily scaled back, perhaps to just 100 shares in some companies. This rules out the stags who have put in large amounts and could cut profits for others to below worthwhile levels.

However, those who have

applied for a wide spread of shares in small amounts in their own names and their families', and who plan to sell out immediately, could still see a fair return.

Prices on the grey market were holding steady, with all 12 indicating an average premium of 36p for every 100p part-paid invested.

It appears there has been no "Northumbrian effect" this time. In last year's water float, Northumbrian was easily the most popular of the ten companies with the stags, and most ended up with nothing.

Smith New Court figures
depressed by Gulf tensionBy GRAHAM SEARJEANT
FINANCIAL EDITOR

THE depression in stock market trading since the invasion of Kuwait has wrecked hopes of a sharp upturn in profits at Smith New Court, the securities house. The group made pre-tax profits of £4.1 million in the six months to November 2. That was double the £2 million reported for the same period in 1989, but those figures were depressed by an unquantified loss, thought to be about £3 million, on a holding of Ferranti shares.

This year Smith New Court benefited from several bought deals and placings, including stakes in NSM and De La Rue. Trading was still buoyant in June, when the group last reported, but volumes collapsed later in the summer.

Michael Marks, the chief

executive, said: "We are satisfied with the results, rather than disappointed, within the context of the marketplace. In August and September, business just died. The Gulf crisis was like turning off the tap."

Business recovered slightly in October and November and Smith New Court will benefit in the second half from trading of electricity shares and placings of stakes in BAA and Welsh Water. But Mr Marks said business was still much less buoyant than in the second half of 1989-90, when Smith New Court made pre-tax profits of £12.5 million.

City institutions were still waiting for a resolution of the Gulf crisis, he said. Trading volumes are usually higher if share prices rise.

In line with its new policy of trying to increase dividends

steadily from a low base, Smith New Court has declared an interim dividend of 0.5p to be paid at the end of February (nil). Last year's final dividend was 3p.

There was an extraordinary loss of £4.1 million from the sale of the group's one-third stake in National Investment Holdings, which Sir Michael Richardson, the chairman, said was distinct from the mainstream of the business. He said this loss should be covered in the second half by a somewhat larger profit on the surrender of a lease when Smith New Court moves to its new building.

The shares, which have fallen from 105p since the full-year results in June, recovered 1.5p to 85p. Basic earnings were 1.98p per share for the half year but 4.36p allowing for conversion of prior capital.

THE POUND

US dollar 1.9510 (+0.0120)
German mark 2.8808 (+0.0068)
Exchange index 93.5 (-0.1)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share 1723.8 (+5.9)
FT-SE 100 1813.4 (+5.9)

New York Dow Jones 2582.92 (-19.56)

Tokyo Nikkei Ave 23522.49 (+969.39)

Closing Prices ... Page 37

Major indices and major changes Page 34

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base: 14%
3-month interbank 13½-13¾%
3-month cable bills 12½-12¾%
US: Prime Rate 10%
Federal Funds 7½%
3-month Treasury Bills 6.88-6.88%
30-year bonds 105½-105¾%

CURRENCIES

London: New York
£ \$1 9510
£ DM2 8808
£ Sfr 4.581
£ FF9 7813
£ Yen 253 38
£ Index 330
£ ECU 1.738243
£ ECU 1.411275
New York: New York
\$ \$1 9508
\$ DM1 4758
\$ Sfr 2.2627
\$ FF6 0155
\$ Yen 131 00
\$ Index 300
\$ ECU 1.738243
\$ ECU 1.354587

GOLD

London: AM 371.10 pm 370.80
Close 370.90-371.40 (E190 50-191 00)
New York: COMEX 370.45-370.95

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Jan 1) ... £27 15 bbl (\$26 70)
Dances latest trading prices

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Rate	Bank	Rate
Australia	2.95	Bank	2.45
Austria	2.95	Bank	2.45
Belgium	2.95	Bank	2.45
Canada	2.95	Bank	2.45
Denmark	11.80	Bank	11.80
France	10.10	Bank	10.10
Germany	10.10	Bank	10.10
Greece	14.50	Bank	14.50
Hong Kong	15.70	Bank	15.70
India	15.70	Bank	15.70
Italy	22.70	Bank	22.70
Japan	22.70	Bank	22.70
Netherlands	3.18	Bank	3.18
Norway	1.80	Bank	1.80
Portugal	2.60	Bank	2.60
Spain	16.50	Bank	16.50
Sweden	11.20	Bank	11.20
Switzerland	5.50	Bank	5.50
Turkey	2.08	Bank	2.08
USA	3.00	Bank	3.00
Yugoslavia	31.00	Bank	31.00

Rates for travel arrangements only as quoted by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Retail prices include 130.3 (October)

Pirelli bid success would trim Continental

From WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU
IN MILAN

PIRELLI, the Italian tyre company, will amalgamate and streamline its management with that of Continental within three years if its hostile bid for the German group is successful.

Management levels at Continental would be cut, factories reorganised, although not necessarily closed, and there are likely to be job losses, particularly if the downturn in the tyre industry continues as experts predict. In selected foreign markets, Pirelli may replace the name of Continental with its own.

According to information obtained by *The Times*, Pirelli, while prepared to negotiate the terms of its offer, insists it must take a majority stake, a stand that has become the sticking point in talks. There is

dismay at Pirelli about a pledge made by Horst Urban, the ebullient chief executive of Continental, that there will be no redundancies if Continental stays independent. Herr Urban's pledge has won him the support of the workforce, whose representatives hold half the seats on the company's supervisory board.

Pirelli has refused to defend its stand, but will reject claims made by Herr Urban that the merged company would lose sales because of the resulting near-monopoly, particularly in relation to Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz. Herr Urban says that together the companies would account for 64 per cent of tyre sales at Volkswagen, Pirelli's contribution being only 9 per cent.

Continental's strength is in the middle market for tyres, covering

the average four-door saloon, while Pirelli supplies tyres for upmarket sports cars and small cars.

It is understood that Pirelli will want to challenge Michelin's dominant position in the tyre market for commercial vehicles and trucks. In Europe, Michelin enjoys a 50 per cent market share and higher margins. The world tyre markets for commercial and private vehicles are about the same size, although Pirelli and Continental are under-represented in the commercial vehicle and truck tyre market.

Pirelli's reluctance to agree to a joint venture company and its wish to streamline the managements of the two companies stems from the Italian group's disastrous joint venture with Dunlop in the Seventies. The two companies were unable to work out joint strategies, operate

joint manufacturing operations, and therefore unable to benefit from economies of scale, which is the main rationale behind Pirelli's bid for Continental.

Economies of scale are increasingly working to the disadvantage of medium-sized companies because of the increased variety of tyres, which in Pirelli's case has doubled over the last five years to 200.

Pirelli believes that in Europe Continental and itself still operate on critical mass economies in the market for car tyres. Neither company has achieved this in the truck tyres market or wider foreign markets. Pirelli says such economies could be achieved in these areas were the two companies merged.

Pirelli had held merger talks with the shareholders of Continental before it launched its bid in September.

Pirelli claims to have the support of the majority of shareholders in Continental, although proof has not been forthcoming.

It is thought that Pirelli wants to continue talks with Continental's management and shareholders, in particular Deutsche Bank, one of whose directors, Ulrich Weiss, is also chairman of Continental. Only when it becomes obvious that Continental continues to oppose a deal will Pirelli consider calling an extraordinary meeting of shareholders in an effort to lift 5 per cent voting restrictions. Success there would allow Pirelli to buy shares in the market to obtain 51 per cent of the equity. Such a move, however, is seen as a last resort. However, due to the stand of Herr Urban and his staff, this appears the most likely scenario.

Warning by Redwood to directors on behaviour

By COLIN NARBROUGH

THE spate of big British companies running into serious trouble, or failing, this year has provoked John Redwood, the corporate affairs minister, to issue a strong warning to company directors to behave more prudently.

The statement, from the free market-oriented minister, also contained words of caution about the merits of takeovers. "Evidence is rising that, except in the very short-term, takeovers can all too often damage the wealth of the shareholders of the bidding company rather than improving it."

Mr Redwood said only a limited number of British companies had been adept at taking over others and making more of a success of them.

Stressing the need for strong action by the regulatory authorities to deter and prevent fraud, Mr Redwood said the quality and style of corporate governance in Britain was moving "high up the agenda".

He said: "A number of

spectacular insolvencies, coupled with greater success by the authorities in tracking down cases of fraud, insider dealing, market manipulation and malpractice has triggered the debate."

Reflecting mounting City concern over the problems that have hit well-known companies where one person fills the posts of chairman and chief executive, were the same person, Mr Redwood said in any medium- and large-sized company "there is a lot to be said for splitting the roles".

He identified a "strong case" for larger companies having three to four non-executive directors on their main board who can also sit on an audit committee, set the pay of the executive directors, and ensure that systems are in place to prevent fraud and spot financial problems at an early stage.

Although compliance with the law on filing yearly company accounts has risen to 80 per cent, he said this remained unsatisfactory.

"We will be pursuing directors at their home addresses pointing out to them they are individually responsible for ensuring that their companies do meet the disclosure standards laid down."

On the issue of corporate governance, Mr Redwood noted that some people questioned whether the Anglo-Saxon style of equity finance and company management could compete successfully with the bank-driven traditions of continental Europe. He foresaw a time when continental Europe would come to appreciate the value of open and active equity markets like those in Britain.

Mr Redwood also made clear that he does not think all the blame for corporate difficulties lie with company directors. "Some banks may well need to develop longer term relationships with their clients - and vice versa."



Amicable backing for building society bids: Philip Court (left) and Kenneth Murray

Predator stalks societies

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT, FINANCIAL EDITOR

SCOTTISH Amicable has emerged as the principal backer of a new financial group that hopes to make friendly takeovers of small- and medium-sized building societies and convert them to bank status.

The mutual life assurance group has put up £10 million for a 39 per cent stake in Ariston, formed by Kenneth Murray, former bank share analyst and money broker. Ariston has raised £26 million of initial capital from various British and continental institutions.

The name is adapted from the motto of the University of St Andrews, Mr Murray says, and means always to excel. But the group plans to call itself The Bank of Edinburgh, a name that has been registered but cannot be used until authorised by the Bank of England.

Mr Murray has recruited Philip Court, chief executive

of Birmingham Midshires building society for 17 years until he left in a dispute over strategy this year.

Mr Court built up Birmingham Midshires to the eleventh biggest society through 20 different mergers, but, perhaps inevitably, became a controversial figure in the cosy building society world.

The group aims to approach selected building societies with profits of between £1 million and £10 million, which covers about a third of the 107 remaining societies. Mr Murray sees a decentralised federation rather than one monolithic institution emerging.

The trading benefits would come from increased scale, consequent cost savings and better services.

Such deals would include a cash payout to society members and offer share options or superior pension deals to se-

nior management. The group does not intend to make any hostile bids, which Mr Court thinks are impractical under society rules. "People are naturally nervous about change, but the benefits are obvious," said Mr Court.

Dr John Wrigglesworth of UBS Phillips & Drew, who has made a special study of building societies and compares their efficiency, says that unlocking reserves could give members payments of between £500 and £1,000.

"The idea is eminently sensible," he says, but he is doubtful if it will work when the housing market has made many societies extra-cautious. "You can have an excellent strategy that will make everyone richer, but you are dealing with local building society boards of directors who usually have a deep belief in mutuality."

Mr Bond was arrested on Thursday by a state government task force in connection with his role in an attempted rescue of Rothwells Ltd, a finance company that collapsed in 1988.

Mr Bond is the sixth person to be arrested and charged by the Rothwells investigators in the past week.

Alan Bond remanded on bail of £40,000

Perth ALAN Bond, the businessman, became defendant number 77,574 when he appeared in a Perth court after being arrested and charged with breaching Western Australia's securities industry code.

Mr Bond, aged 52, who was not required to plead, was yesterday remanded on A\$100,000 (£40,000) bail and a A\$100,000 surety to appear again on January 31. Mr Bond can then elect to have a preliminary hearing or go immediately to trial.

Mr Bond, the former chairman of Bond Corporation, was addressed as "defendant number 77,574" by Richard Bromfield, the magistrate.

The charge is that on October 26, 1987, "Alan Bond, by dishonestly concealing a material fact... induced or attempted to induce Brian Richard Coppin to deal in securities by deleting a condition from a sub-underwriting agreement between Coppin and Wardley Australia Securities Ltd."

It said Mr Bond failed to disclose to Mr Coppin, another Perth businessman, that Rothwells had agreed to pay Mr Bond's flagship company, Bond Corporation, A\$16 million on or before December 24, 1987.

The offence carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison or an A\$20,000 fine, or both.

Mr Bond was arrested on Thursday by a state government task force in connection with his role in an attempted rescue of Rothwells Ltd, a finance company that collapsed in 1988.

Mr Bromfield ruled that Mr Bond must give the task force 24 hours' notice of any intention to travel abroad and his initial destination, despite objections from his lawyer.

Mr Bond remained silent throughout the ten-minute proceedings.

On Thursday, Mr Bond issued a statement saying he was innocent of any wrongdoing and denied he had acted dishonestly.

Mr Bond is the sixth person to be arrested and charged by the Rothwells investigators in the past week.

(Reuters)

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Gaynor shares dive after losses deepen

SHARES in Gaynor Group, the Unlisted Securities Market-quoted manufacturer of plastic bags and packaging film, collapsed from 23p to 3p after the group's losses deepened. The company dived to pre-tax losses of £1.54 million in the year to end-August (£123,000 profit). The group had slipped into the red with a £557,000 loss at the interim stage. It blamed the results on a jump in raw material costs and the loss of two major supermarket customers.

Peter Giles, the managing director, said the loss of the customers was largely responsible for a drop in turnover from £8.28 million to £6.41 million. He said the Gulf tension had led to a 50 per cent jump in the price of the company's raw materials.

There is a 20p loss per share, against earnings of 1.5p previously. Once again, there is no dividend.

North Sea asset swap

CLYDE Petroleum, the independent oil company, and Fina Petroleum Development have agreed a North Sea asset exchange. Clyde is to acquire Fina's 25 per cent interest in block 9/18b, increasing its total interest in the block to 35 per cent. Fina will receive three parcels from Clyde: 2.65 per cent in block 16/26, 15 per cent in block 16/27b, and a 5.5 per cent interest in block 22/5b.

Fobel trims interim loss

FOBEL International, the electrical goods and DIY accessories manufacturer, has trimmed pre-tax losses from £592,000 to £378,000 in the half year to end-June. Turnover slipped from £10.1 million to £9.01 million. The loss per share is reduced from 4.04p to 3.25p. There is no interim dividend, but the board will consider a final payout when the full-year results are known.

Sanderson ahead 10%

SANDERSON Electronics, supplier of computer systems, increased taxable profits by 10 per cent to £3.3 million in the year to end-September on turnover of £14.3 million, up 19 per cent. Earnings were 8 per cent higher at 24.8p a share.

The company, which paid an interim dividend of 3p a share, is to pay a first interim dividend of 5p a share for the year to end-September 1991, instead of a final dividend for the year just ended. A second interim dividend for the current financial year will be paid in July 1991. Net assets rose to £2.01 million (£1.34 million).

Boscombe up Jones, Stroud to £125,000 midway slip

BOSCOMBE Property had pre-tax profits of £125,000 for the six months to end-September, compared with a £32,700 loss for the same period last year. Gross rental income was ahead 10 per cent at £342,000. The company said that "a satisfactory profit is expected for the full year". An interim 40p ordinary dividend compares with 25p last year.

JONES, Stroud, the specialist textiles and electrical company, reports a 23 per cent decline in pre-tax profits to £2.7 million for the six months to end-September. Turnover was almost unchanged at £30.1 million and the interim dividend is held at 3p. The company expects similar profits for the rest of the year, in which event the final dividend will be maintained at last year's 8p.

Utd Industries dives

UNITED Industries, the spring and cutting tools maker, has cut its dividend after a decline in first-half pre-tax profits, from £1.36 million to £693,000 in the six months to October 6. There were higher interest costs and reduced operating profits.

The company said that although the material handling division maintained profitability at operating level, the springs division was affected by reductions in customers' requirements. Earnings fell from 2.54p to 1.41p. The interim dividend is cut from 1.2p to 0.5p. Shares lost 5p to 23p.

Debt servicing tips Leica into losses

By JONATHAN PRYNN

LEICA, the USM-quoted optics group formed out of a merger involving Cambridge Instruments last year, has announced an £859,000 pre-tax loss for the half year to end-September, despite earnings operating profits of £7.4 million.

The pre-tax figure was hit by the £8.2 million cost of servicing the debt taken on at the time of the merger. The interim dividend is up 8 per cent at 0.28p.

Dr Stephan Schmidheiny, the chairman, said the merger made it difficult to compare

this year's figures with 1989. However, the merged group's six-month turnover of £251 million represented an increase of £5.3 million on last year's first-half aggregated sales of Cambridge Instruments and Wild Leitz Holding, the two companies that merged to form Leica. Operating profits were £7.7 million ahead of last year's aggregated figure.

"Generally we are making good progress with our merger and reorganisation plans," said Dr Markus Rauh, the chief executive officer.

'No deal' for Nissan in UK

By ROSS TEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

NISSAN Motor Company of Japan appears ready to rebuff an invitation to take over the distribution of its vehicles in Britain. Nissan said it was "doubtful that businesslike negotiations can take place because of the past experience that we have had."

Yesterday's response apparently stems from unsuccessful talks in 1986 between Nissan of Japan and its independently controlled British distributor, Nissan UK.

There has also been tension between the companies since the launch of the British-built Primera saloon in September. Nissan UK says it is charged too much for the cars. A 1.6 litre model retails in Britain for £9,995, about £1,500 more than a car with a higher specification in Germany.

Nissan UK has the exclusive distribution rights for

Nissan cars, trucks and industrial products in Britain, in perpetuity. Britain is Nissan's biggest European market, taking 138,000 vehicles last year.

Octav Botnar, chairman and managing director of Nissan UK, offered to negotiate a sale in a private letter sent two weeks ago to Yutaka Kame, president of Nissan. A Nissan spokeswoman said the letter had been "acknowledged".

Mr Botnar suggested a phased acquisition of control by Nissan, spread over four to five years, and indicated that price was of secondary importance. Outside estimates of the value of Nissan UK range from £300 million to £500 million. In the year to end-July 1989, Nissan UK made pre-tax profits of £69.3 million on sales of £950 million.

Yesterday, Mr Botnar said

takeover talks during 1986-87 led to the signing of a letter of intent between Nissan UK and Mitsui, the Japanese trading house, and Nissan, acting jointly. Nissan UK was represented by Kleinwort Benson, and Nissan-Mitsui by Morgan Grenfell.

Mr Botnar said: "After a number of meetings Morgan Grenfell revealed they had no instructions from Mitsui-Nissan to make an offer, and our bankers accordingly sent us their bill and advised us to discontinue discussions."

Ownership of Nissan UK was transferred by Mr Botnar to a group of charities 16 years ago.

Mr Botnar has not offered to sell Automotive and Financial Group Holdings, a company split out of Nissan UK two years ago, which he also runs.

August, the group had gone into receivership but Lowndes' customers have cause to be grateful to Mr Ireland. He put in place the £15 million insurance policy for customer deposits.

At Savage Group, the USM-quoted hardware supplier, where Nick Savage, the chairman, and David Brown, chief executive, recently resigned, Mr Ireland has said he will not stand for re-election.

This year has also seen the £337.5 million takeover of Broom by Gamblestaden, the Swedish financial services group, and the suspension of London & Metropolitan's share price at 8p.

But despite the never-ending round of board meetings the 67-year-old super-director still has time for other things. *Who's Who* lists his recreations as gardening, ballet, opera and music.

Failed property magnate jailed

Brisbane GEORGE Herscu, the bankrupt Australian property magnate, has been sentenced to five years in jail for bribing a state government minister.

Herscu, the Romanian-born former head of Hooker Corporation, the collapsed property and retail group, was sentenced in the Brisbane District Court by Judge Pat Shanahan. The judge told Herscu, aged 62, the bribe was the most unwise investment he had ever made. The judge did not set an early parole date.

A jury on Thursday found Herscu guilty of two corruption charges relating to an A\$100,000 (£39,000) bribe made in 1983 to Russ Hinz, the former Queensland state government minister.

Herscu told the court he paid Mr Hinz the money to buy Herscu racehorses, although none was ever bought.

The prosecution said the money was paid to encourage Mr Hinz to assist with political favours.

Herscu, who wept during character evidence by a friend before the sentencing, declared himself bankrupt in July this year with debts of almost A\$500 million.

Hooker Corp was put into receivership in July last year with debts of about A\$2 billion.

Herscu came to Australia in 1950 as a penniless immigrant, working his way up to become one of the country's wealthiest men. He took over Hooker Corp in 1986.

Mr Hinz, a former minister in the Queensland government of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, is also facing official corruption charges but the



'Bribe was most unwise investment': George Herscu, sentenced to five years in jail

case has been adjourned due to Mr Hinz's ill health.

Sir Joh, the former Queensland premier, will face a court next year on a charge of

official corruption and two counts of perjury arising from the Fitzgerald enquiry.

The enquiry, headed by Tony Fitzgerald, a lawyer,

found corruption widespread in the "Sunshine State", ruled by Sir Joh for two decades until 1987.

(Reuters)

Ireland going out of fashion

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

NORMAN Ireland, the company doctor who failed in his attempted rescue of Lowndes Queensway this year, has left the board of Etam, the fashion retailer, after nearly four years as a non-executive director.

The Etam board said Mr Ireland was leaving because of his "personal commitments elsewhere", a euphemism commonly used by directors departing on less than amicable terms. But in Mr Ireland's case it appears to be true. He is a land's case it appears to be 25 companies, not to mention 12 subsidiaries.

Mr Ireland is well known for his chairmanship of Bowater Industries, chairmanship of Bowater & Metro-Bromcom Group and London & Metropolitan. According to the latest *Directory*

of Directors, he also includes among his boards: Allied Polymer Group, APG Management Services, BTR, HG Miles (Holdings), Hewitt Hose, Hi Flex Cams, Hydrolux-Num Jabroc (Tools), Jabrol, MPB Development Engineers, Meggit, Savage Group, The Scottish Heritable Trust, Serck, Silvertown Trading AG Switzerland, South Wales Brattice Cloth & Inga Rubber Co, Staxgate, Thomas Tilling International, WA Holdings and Worcester Controls.

While the South Wales Brattice Cloth & Inga Rubber Company may not take up too much of his time, it has been an eventful year for Mr Ireland. In January, he agreed to take over the chairmanship of Lowndes Queensway, the troubled furniture to carpets retailer, saying that he would step down in October. By

August, the group had gone into receivership but Lowndes' customers have cause to be grateful to Mr Ireland. He put in place the £15 million insurance policy for customer deposits.

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THE TIMES

UNIT TRUST STATISTICS

Monthly performance figures show value of £100 based on offer to offer price without income re-invested and ranking within sector. Yearly figures are based on offer to bid prices with income re-invested. — Unit trust was founded within the last year. JPEP scheme available. Source: Finstat.

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Alcoa	59.21	56.77	102.89	22.26	78.12																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																													
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United International	61.58	57.95	56.22	53.87	51.3	48.7	46.1	43.5	40.9	38.3	35.7	33.1	30.5	27.9	25.3	22.7	20.1	17.5	14.9	12.3	9.7	7.1	4.5	1.9	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0
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will know in himself whether in the past today and tomorrow
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Food	old price	offer price	1 month prev. price	1 year prev. price
GT Germany	88.88	94.41	102.2	85.4
Italy Northern European	91.11	96.64	104.4	87.7
France European	93.33	98.86	106.6	89.9
Spain European	116.6	122.23	130.0	111.1
UK European	122.22	127.75	135.5	117.7
Netherlands East	100.00	105.53	113.3	94.4
Denmark East	102.22	107.75	115.5	96.6
Japan East	104.44	109.98	117.7	98.8
India East	106.66	112.21	120.0	101.1
Malaysia East	108.88	114.44	122.2	103.3
Philippines East	110.11	116.67	124.4	105.5
Thailand East	112.22	118.88	126.6	107.7
China East	114.44	121.11	128.8	109.9
South Korea East	116.66	123.33	131.1	112.2
Japan South	118.88	125.55	133.3	114.4
India South	120.00	127.77	135.5	116.6
Malaysia South	122.22	129.99	137.7	118.8
Philippines South	124.44	132.22	140.0	121.1
Thailand South	126.66	134.44	142.2	123.3
China South	128.88	136.66	144.4	125.5
South Korea South	130.10	138.88	146.6	127.7
Japan East	132.22	141.11	148.8	129.9
India East	134.44	143.33	151.1	132.2
Malaysia East	136.66	145.55	153.3	134.4
Philippines East	138.88	147.77	155.5	136.6
Thailand East	140.10	149.99	157.7	138.8
China East	142.22	152.22	160.0	141.1
South Korea East	144.44	154.44	162.2	143.3
Japan East	146.66	156.66	164.4	145.5
India East	148.88	158.88	166.6	147.7
Malaysia East	150.10	161.11	168.8	149.9
Philippines East	152.22	163.33	171.1	152.2
Thailand East	154.44	165.55	173.3	154.4
China East	156.66	167.77	175.5	156.6
South Korea East	158.88	169.99	177.7	158.8
Japan East	160.10	172.22	180.0	161.1
India East	162.22	174.44	182.2	163.3
Malaysia East	164.44	176.66	184.4	165.5
Philippines East	166.66	178.88	186.6	167.7
Thailand East	168.88	181.11	188.8	169.9
China East	170.10	183.33	191.1	172.2
South Korea East	172.22	185.55	193.3	174.4
Japan East	174.44	187.77	195.5	176.6
India East	176.66	190.00	197.7	178.8
Malaysia East	178.88	192.22	200.0	181.1
Philippines East	180.10	194.44	202.2	183.3
Thailand East	182.22	196.66	204.4	185.5
China East	184.44	198.88	206.6	187.7
South Korea East	186.66	201.11	208.8	189.9
Japan East	188.88	203.33	211.1	192.2
India East	190.10	205.55	213.3	194.4
Malaysia East	192.22	207.77	215.5	196.6
Philippines East	194.44	210.00	217.7	198.8
Thailand East	196.66	212.22	220.0	201.1
China East	198.88	214.44	222.2	203.3
South Korea East	200.10	216.66	224.4	205.5
Japan East	202.22	218.88	226.6	207.7
India East	204.44	221.11	228.8	209.9
Malaysia East	206.66	223.33	231.1	212.2
Philippines East	208.88	225.55	233.3	214.4
Thailand East	210.10	227.77	235.5	216.6
China East	212.22	230.00	237.7	218.8
South Korea East	214.44	232.22	240.0	221.1
Japan East	216.66	234.44	242.2	223.3
India East	218.88	236.66	244.4	225.5
Malaysia East	220.10	238.88	246.6	227.7
Philippines East	222.22	241.11	248.8	229.9
Thailand East	224.44	243.33	251.1	232.2
China East	226.66	245.55	253.3	234.4
South Korea East	228.88	247.77	255.5	236.6
Japan East	230.10	250.00	257.7	238.8
India East	232.22	252.22	260.0	241.1
Malaysia East	234.44	254.44	262.2	243.

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FINANCIAL & PROPERTY									
Praxair Inc.	2014	35,369	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2013	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2012	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2011	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2010	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2009	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2008	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2007	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2006	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2005	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2004	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2003	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2002	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2001	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	2000	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1999	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1998	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1997	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1996	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1995	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1994	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1993	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1992	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1991	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1990	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1989	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1988	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1987	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1986	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1985	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1984	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1983	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1982	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1981	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1980	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1979	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1978	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1977	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1976	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1975	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1974	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1973	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1972	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1971	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1970	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1969	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1968	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1967	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1966	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1965	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1964	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1963	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1962	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1961	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1960	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1959	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1958	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1957	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1956	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1955	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1954	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1953	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1952	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1951	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1950	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1949	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1948	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1947	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1946	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1945	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1944	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1943	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1942	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1941	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1940	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1939	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1938	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1937	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1936	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1935	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1934	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1933	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1932	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1931	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1930	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1929	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1928	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1927	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1926	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1925	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1924	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1923	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1922	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1921	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1920	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1919	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1918	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1917	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1916	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1915	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1914	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1913	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1912	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1911	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1910	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1909	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1908	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1907	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1906	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1905	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1904	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1903	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1902	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1901	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1900	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1899	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1898	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1897	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1896	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1895	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1894	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1893	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1892	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1891	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1890	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1889	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1888	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1887	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1886	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1885	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1884	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1883	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1882	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1881	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1880	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1879	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1878	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1877	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1876	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1875	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1874	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1873	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1872	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1871	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1870	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1869	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1868	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1867	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1866	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1865	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1864	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1863	34,340	100.0	33	74.9	85.96			
Praxair Inc.	1862	34,340	100.0	33					

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GI For Europe	157.20	158.33	162.3	168	173	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	524	525	526	527	528	529	530	531	532	533	534	535	536	537	538	539	540	541	542	543	544	545	546	547	548	549	550	551	552	553	554	555	556	557	558	559	560	561	562	563	564	565	566	567	568	569	570	571	572	573	574	575	576	577	578	579	580	581	582	583	584	585	586	587	588	589	590	591	592	593	594	595	596	597	598	599	600	601	602	603	604	605	606	607	608	609	610	611	612	613	614	615	616	617	618	619	620	621	622	623	624	625	626	627	628	629	630	631	632	633	634	635	636	637	638	639	640	641	642	643	644	645	646	647	648	649	650	651	652	653	654	655	656	657	658	659	660	661	662	663	664	665	666	667	668	669	670	671	672	673	674	675	676	677	678	679	680	681	682	683	684	685	686	687	688	689	690	691	692	693	694	695	696	697	698	699	700	701	702	703	704	705	706	707	708	709	710	711	712	713	714	715	716	717	718	719	720	721	722	723	724	725	726	727	728	729	730	731	732	733	734	735	736	737	738	739	740	741	742	743	744	745	746	747	748	749	750	751	752	753	754	755	756	757	758	759	760	761	762	763	764	765	766	767	768	769	770	771	772	773	774	775	776	777	778	779	780	781	782	783	784	785	786	787	788	789	790	791	792	793	794	795	796	797	798	799	800	801	802	803	804	805	806	807	808	809	810	811	812	813	814	815	816	817	818	819	820	821	822	823	824	825	826	827	828	829	830	831	832	833	834	835	836	837	838	839	840	841	842	843	844	845	846	847	848	849	850	851	852	853	854	855	856	857	858	859	860	861	862	863	864	865	866	867	868	869	870	871	872	873	874	875	876	877	878	879	880	881	882	883	884	885	886	887	888	889	890	891	892	893	894	895	896	897	898	899	900	901	902	903	904	905	906	907	908	909	910	911	912	913	914	915	916	917	918	919	920	921	922	923	924	925	926	927	928	929	930	931	932	933	934	935	936	937	938	939	940	941	942	943	944	945	946	947	948	949	950	951	952	953	954	955	956	957	958	959	960	961	962	963	964	965	966	967	968	969	970	971	972	973	974	975	976	977	978	979	980	981	982	983	984	985	986	987	988	989	990	991	992	993	994	995	996	997	998	999	1000
GI For Europe	157.20	158.33	162.3	168	173	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195	196	197	198	199	200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213	214	215	216	217	218	219	220	221	222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233	234	235	236	237	238	239	240	241	242	243	244	245	246	247	248	249	250	251	252	253	254	255	256	257	258	259	260	261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297	298	299	300	301	302	303	304	305	306	307	308	309	310	311	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321	322	323	324	325	326	327	328	329	330	331	332	333	334	335	336	337	338	339	340	341	342	343	344	345	346	347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358	359	360	361	362	363	364	365	366	367	368	369	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	420	421	422	423	424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435	436	437	438	439	440	441	442	443	444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455	456	457	458	459	460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471	472	473	474	475	476	477	478	479	480	481	482	483	484	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	520	521	522	523	524	525	526	527	528	529	530	531	532	533	534	535	536	537	538	539	540	541	542	543	544	545	546	547	548	549	550	551	552	553	554	555	556	557	558	559	560	561	562	563	564	565	566	567	568	569	570	571	572	573	574	575	576	577	578	579	580	581	582	583	584	585	586	587	588	589	590	591	592	593	594	595	596	597	598	599	600	601	602	603	604	605	606	607	608	609	610	611	612	613	614	615	616	617	618	619	620	621	622	623	624	625	626	627	628	629	630	631	632	633	634	635	636	637	638	639	640	641	642	643	644	645	646	647	648	649	650	651	652	653	654	655	656	657	658	659	660	661	662	663	664	665	666	667	668	669	670	671	672	673	674	675	676	677	678	679	680	681	682	683	684	685	686	687	688	689	690	691	692	693	694	695	696	697	698	699	700	701	702	703	704	705	706	707	708	709	710	711	712	713	714	715	716	717	718	719	720	721	722	723	724	725	726	727	728	729	730	731	732	733	734	735	736	737	738	739	740	741	742	743	744	745	746	747	748	749	750	751	752	753	754	755	756	757	758	759	760	761	762	763	764	765	766	767	768	769	770	771	772	773	774	775	776	777	778	779	780	781	782	783	784	785	786	787	788	789	790	791	792	793	794	795	796	797	798	799	800	801	802	803	804	805	806	807	808	809	810	811	812	813	814	815	816	817	818	819	820	821	822	823	824	825	826	827	828	829	830	831	832	833	834	835	836	837	838	839	840	841	842	843	844	845	846	847	848	849	850	851	852	853	854	855	856	857	858	859	860	861	862	863	864	865	866	867	868	869	870	871	872	873	874	875	876	877	878	879	880	881																																																																																																																							

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Portfolio
PLATINUM

From your Portfolio Platinum card check your eight share price movements on this page only. Add these prices to your running total for the week and check this against the weekly dividend figure on this page. If it matches this figure, you have won outright or a share of the total weekly prize money stated. If you win, follow the claim procedure on the back of your card. You must always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

No.	Company	Group	Gain or Loss
1	Nat West Ltd	Banking	1.00
2	Geni SR	Geni SR	1.00
3	TCI	Telecom	1.00
4	Compass GR	Leisure	1.00
5	Ward Group	Building	1.00
6	Bank of Wales	Banking	1.00
7	Prudential Alexander	Insurance	1.00
8	Unilever	Food	1.00
9	King & Sherson	Banking	1.00
10	Yorkshire Water	Water	1.00
11	Wendham Eng	Industrial	1.00
12	Orkney Council	Local Govt	1.00
13	Shircliffe Ltd	Food	1.00
14	Pratt Water	Water	1.00
15	RIC Ltd	Building	1.00
16	Penland	Industrial	1.00
17	Hardy O & G	Oil & Gas	1.00
18	Leeds (L)	Banking	1.00
19	Sale (L)	Industrial	1.00
20	Permacor	Building	1.00
21	Calor Gas	Oil & Gas	1.00
22	North West	Water	1.00
23	Bar (L)	Food	1.00
24	First Leisure	Leisure	1.00
25	Greencoat	Property	1.00
26	Thames Water	Water	1.00
27	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
28	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
29	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
30	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
31	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
32	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
33	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
34	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
35	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
36	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
37	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
38	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
39	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
40	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
41	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
42	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
43	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
44	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
45	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
46	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
47	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
48	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
49	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00
50	Unilever (L)	Food	1.00

Please take into account any minus signs

Weekly Dividend						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	TOTAL
1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.00

There were no valid claims for yesterday's £2,000 Portfolio Platinum prize. The money will be added to Monday's prize.

BRITISH FUNDS

1990 High Low Stock Price Change % P/E

SHORTS (Under Five Years)

1990	High	Low	Stock	Price	Change	%	P/E
1	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
2	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
3	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
4	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
5	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
6	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
7	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
8	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
9	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
10	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0

FIVE TO FIFTEEN YEARS

1990	High	Low	Stock	Price	Change	%	P/E
1	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
2	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
3	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
4	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
5	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
6	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
7	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
8	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
9	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
10	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0

OVER FIFTEEN YEARS

1990	High	Low	Stock	Price	Change	%	P/E
1	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
2	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
3	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
4	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
5	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
6	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
7	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
8	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
9	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
10	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0

UNDATED

1990	High	Low	Stock	Price	Change	%	P/E
1	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
2	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
3	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
4	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
5	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
6	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
7	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
8	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
9	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
10	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0

INDEX-LINKED

1990	High	Low	Stock	Price	Change	%	P/E
1	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
2	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
3	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
4	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
5	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
6	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
7	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
8	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
9	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
10	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0

BANKS, DISCOUNT, HP

1990	High	Low	Stock	Price	Change	%	P/E
1	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
2	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
3	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
4	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
5	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
6	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
7	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
8	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
9	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
10	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES

Firm trend

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began November 19. Dealings ended yesterday. Settlement day December 10. Settlement day December 17.
Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days.

Prices recorded are at market close. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Where one price is quoted, it is a middle price. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices. (xx) denotes Alpha Stocks. (VOLUMES: PAGE 35).

1990	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
2	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
3	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
4	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
5	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
6	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
7	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
8	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
9	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
10	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0

BREWERIES

1990	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
2	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
3	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
4	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
5	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
6	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
7	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
8	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
9	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
10	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0

BUILDING, ROADS

1990	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
2	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
3	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
4	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
5	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
6	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
7	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
8	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
9	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
10	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0

1990	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
2	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
3	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
4	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
5	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
6	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
7	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
8	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
9	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0
10	1.00	0.95	100% 1990	1.00	0.05	5.0	10.0

FINANCE, LAND

139	James Street	160	107	89	71
140	John	160	107	89	71
145	John	170	136	100	89
146	John	170	136	100	89
148	John	170	136	100	89
150	John	170	136	100	89
152	John	170	136	100	89
154	John	170	136	100	89
156	John	170	136	100	89
158	John	170	136	100	89
160	John	170	136	100	89
162	John	170	136	100	89
164	John	170	136	100	89
166	John	170	136	100	89
168	John	170	136	100	89
170	John	170	136	100	89
172	John	170	136	100	89
174	John	170	136	100	89
176	John	170	136	100	89
178	John	170	136	100	89
180	John	170	136	100	89
182	John	170	136	100	89
184	John	170	136	100	89
186	John	170	136	100	89
188	John	170	136	100	89
190	John	170	136	100	89
192	John	170	136	100	89
194	John	170	136	100	89
196	John	170	136	100	89
198	John	170	136	100	89
200	John	170	136	100	89

LETTERS

Small claims court holds sway over act of God

From Dr Sydney G. Donald
Sir, Mrs Baker's unfortunate encounter with an act of God (Court victory for car owner, November 24) recalls the mishap which befell (literally) my wife's car some years ago when she parked in windy weather next to a Methodist church.

When two large chimney pots crashed down from the church, just missing my wife but crushing the car roof, the church council — no doubt with some authority — dismissed the accident out of hand as an act of God. We had no option but to have the car

repaired under our vehicle policy, thus losing our no claims bonus entitlement.

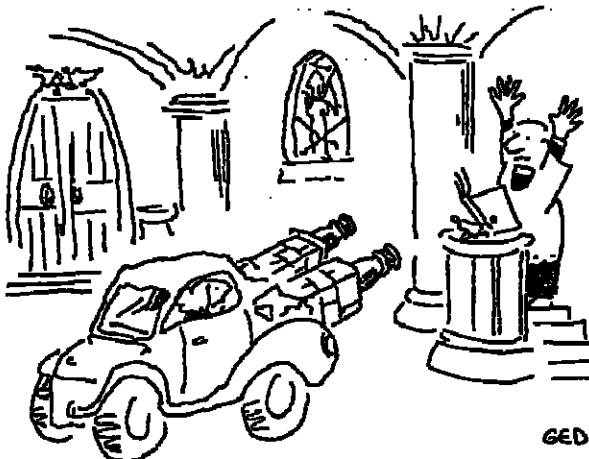
When neither the AA nor our own car insurance company showed any interest in our plight, we decided to sue the church, on the grounds of inadequate maintenance, in the small claims court (against advice from court officials that "you can't sue a church").

As the cost of repairs was £850 — well beyond the court limit of £500 — we adopted the expedient of suing only for our "uninsured losses", i.e. the policy excess of £25. We had persuaded our insurance com-

pany to treat recovery of this sum as an admission of liability by the church, and therefore as grounds for reinstating our no claims bonus in full.

The case never came to court: a few days after the issue of the summons, a cheque from the church in settlement of our claim was thrust furiously through our letterbox. So all small litigants, take heart! The powers of the small claims court extend even unto acts of God!

Yours faithfully,
SYDNEY G. DONALD,
3 Welburn Avenue,
Leeds, West Yorkshire.



Ex-clients wait for Stock Group funds

From G. J. Almendres
Sir, As a regular reader of the business sections of *The Times*, I was very interested in your article concerning clients of Stock Group. I have almost £3,000 frozen somewhere in the British and Commonwealth Merchant Bank, representing the proceeds of a share sale I made as a client of Stock Group.

I received a letter from P. Darwall-Smith of Stock Group on July 30, which advised me that I would be kept informed of any important developments. However, although I have spoken by telephone to Stock Group staff on several occasions, there has been no further information in writing as to when the funds will become available.

I spoke again by telephone to Stock Group staff last month, and was advised that talks were going on about a takeover of BCMB by a Turkish organisation, which might release funds very soon. However, they could not/would not tell me about the possibility of any claims under the

banking depositors protection scheme. I fully support your comment that someone ought to make sure that Stock Group clients receive some money, and quickly. Stock Group were very quick to offer clients the opportunity to become clients of Fidelity Share Services. They should show the same concern in helping their ex-clients get access to their funds. I hope you will continue to focus attention on this matter until a satisfactory conclusion is reached.

Yours faithfully,

G. J. ALMENDRES,

9 Rockfield Close,

Oxted, Surrey.

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Published replies marked with the triangular logo are by Bill Packer, tax partner at Touche Ross, the accountant, in association with *The Times*.

Portfolio

PLATINUM

For readers who may have missed a copy of *The Times* this week, we repeat below the week's *Portfolio* price changes (today's are on page 37).

Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Weekly
1	+4	+4	+5	+8	+7			
2	+7	+8	+2	+4	+5			
3	+3	+9	+2	+5	+5			
4	+3	+4	+4	+7	+7			
5	+5	+8	+2	+5	+4			
6	+7	+6	+3	+3	+4			
7	+4	+5	+3	+3	+5			
8	+4	+6	+5	+7	+7			
9	+4	+8	+2	+4	+4			
10	+6	+7	+5	+4	+4			
11	+5	+6	+5	+4	+5			
12	+4	+8	+3	+3	+5			
13	+5	+7	+3	+5	+3			
14	+8	+5	+2	+3	+3			
15	+5	+5	+5	+7	+8			
16	+3	+7	+1	+3	+5			
17	+4	+5	+5	+7	+8			
18	+5	+8	+2	+5	+8			
19	+7	+4	+1	+2	+4			
20	+4	+8	+4	+8	+8			
21	+3	+9	+2	+4	+5			
22	+7	+6	+3	+2	+4			
23	+4	+7	+5	+4	+4			
24	+6	+5	+1	+3	+4			
25	+5	+4	+7	+7	+7			
26	+4	+7	+1	+3	+5			
27	+4	+6	+4	+3	+4			
28	+8	+4	+2	+3	+5			
29	+3	+4	+4	+4	+7			
30	+6	+5	+3	+4	+3			
31	+5	+9	+2	+4	+6			
32	+6	+5	+2	+4	+5			
33	+5	+8	+4	+5	+3			
34	+3	+4	+5	+5	+7			
35	+5	+6	+6	+8	+9			
36	+6	+6	+4	+3	+4			
37	+7	+5	+2	+3	+3			
38	+6	+6	+3	+4	+3			
39	+4	+7	+3	+4	+5			
40	+4	+5	+3	+3	+4			
41	+3	+5	+4	+8	+7			
42	+4	+6	+3	+4	+5			
43	+5	+6	+3	+6	+5			
44	+8	+5	+1	+3	+4			

The 1990 M&G Year Book

40 pages of facts, figures and performance statistics on lump sum and savings plan investment in M&G unit trusts managed by M&G Securities Limited (member of IMRO and Lauto) and the M&G PEP managed by M&G Financial Services Limited (member of IMRO).

To: The M&G Group, M&G House, Victoria Road, Chelmsford CM1 1FB. Tel: (0245) 266256. (Business Hours) Please send me a free copy of the M&G Year Book 1990. NO SALESMAN WILL CALL

NAME: SURNAME:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE: COUNTRY:

The M&G Group is the winner of the 1989 Money Management magazine large unit trust group of the year award and fund management group of the decade award.

BRITAIN'S LEADING UNIT TRUST GROUP

Home studies

From Mr Geoffrey Gardener
Sir, I am 64 and retired on an indexed pension of £12,000 gross. My wife is 53 and has a gross salary of £20,800. We have two sons of 16 and 18.

Our elder son is due to go to university next year. We shall be expected to make a "parental contribution" towards his maintenance.

As this would be meaningless, would it in your view be worth our while to mortgage our house (at present unencumbered) so that mortgage repayments could be set against income? I should be grateful for your opinion.

Yours faithfully

GEORGE GARDENER,

Regnum

Lewes Road,

Ringmer, East Sussex.

It appears that a deduction for parental contribution purposes for interest paid is only allowed where the interest payments are those "on which tax relief is normally allowed". Please see the Department of Education and Science booklet on "Grants to students 1990-91", page 14.

Mortgage interest on the property in which you live as your sole or main residence is only allowable if the money is borrowed to purchase the property; a subsequent borrowing secured on the house would not normally be deductible unless the money was applied for one of the other "qualifying" purposes, which would not seem to be applicable here. In the circumstances, I do not think that your proposal would be effective.

Credit card thief was too quick off mark

From the chief executive, Barclaycard

Sir, I was sorry to read of Mrs McGahey's distressing experience relating to the theft of her Barclaycard and its subsequent use by the thief to obtain a cash advance (December 1). However, I must write to correct a mistaken impression that the fraudulent cash advance occurred ten days after the theft was reported to us.

Mrs McGahey very promptly reported the theft of her Barclaycard at 4.35 pm on September 13 — but even that was not quick enough to stop the thief making a cash advance of £200 over the counter of a nearby building society at 4.30 pm. At the time the cash advance was authorised, Barclaycard had no reason to

suspect that the transaction was anything but genuine. Had the advance occurred from a cash machine the transaction date would have appeared on Mrs McGahey's statement showing the swiftness of the thief. But cash advances over bank or building society counters are dated when they are processed, which will be some days later.

Far from not having the stomach to fight, Barclaycard's fraud department of nearly 200 staff is working hard to eradicate this very worrying problem. Mrs McGahey can rest assured our determination to stop fraud has not wavered.

Yours faithfully,

K. C. BIGNALL,

Barclays Bank,

54 Lombard Street, EC3.

Prize bonds

From Mr Berkley Hawgood

Sir, Your recent correspondence concerning Ernie prompts me to relate my experience. In June 1986 I bought 500 bonds. By October 1989 they had been in the draw for four years without a prize, until October 19 when on that day I received two £50 prizes. The winning numbers differing by only 19.

Yours sincerely,
BERKLEY HAWGOOD,
10 Brynawelon Road,
Cefnbyrbrain,
Cwmilyfelli, Dyfed.

Pep for fees

From Mr R. A. Nicholls

Sir, I invested £2,400 in BP shares in a NatWest Pep in

November 1987. This week I withdrew the investment, and the final account over almost exactly three years is: my profit £475.39, NatWest fees £131.54, brokers' fees £99.93, stamp duty and VAT £34.34.

It would have been difficult to have earned less than £700 tax free from a building society for the same time, and an investment that gives £34 to the government can hardly be called tax-free.

However, it is quite clear why the financial services community welcomes these plans.

Yours faithfully,

R. A. NICHOLLS,

45 Hound Street,

Sherborne,

Dorset.

Tessa tempter from Lloyds

THE first 25,000 savers applying to put the maximum lump sum of £9,000 into a Lloyds Bank tax exempt special savings account (Tessa) will receive a 2 per cent bonus for the first year. Others applying before the end of February will receive 1 per cent extra (Lindsay Cook writes).

The Lloyds Tessa will initially offer 13.5 per cent tax-free plus bonuses, depending on market rates. Interest will be paid annually.

Under the lump sum scheme, £3,000 will be invested in the tax-free Tessa at the beginning of next year and £6,000 in a feeder account.

This will pay the same rate of interest as the Tessa but will be liable to tax.

The Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society launched two Tessas this week. The Maxi-Tessa will transfer the maximum amount from the society's London Share and Cheltenham Gold accounts each year into a Tessa, which will pay the same rate of interest as the parent account but tax-free.

This will give a 15.33 per cent return on the London and 13.67 per cent on Cheltenham Gold. The Flexi-Tessa will allow savers to design their own plans from an initial in-

vestment of £100. The interest rate will start at 12 per cent.

The Bank of Scotland is offering a first-year bonus and a loyalty bonus 0.5 per cent in year five to early applicants. Those who registered before the end of July will earn 13.5 per cent, plus 1 per cent for as long as the bank's base rate stays at 14 per cent. Applicants by the end of February will be paid 13 per cent.

The Chelsea Building Society's Tessa will offer 13 per cent tax-free. There is a 5 per cent bonus on the first year's savings at the end of year five, provided the account is opened by the end of March.

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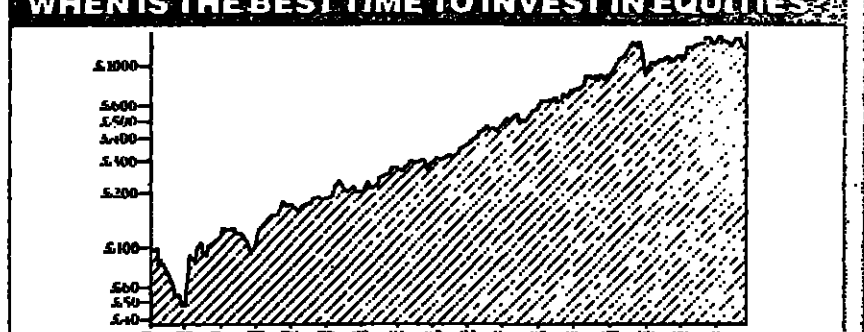
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- ✓ NO income tax on dividends — even for higher rate taxpayers
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WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO INVEST IN EQUITIES?



It's always smart to buy at the very bottom of a market cycle. But who can accurately predict when that will happen? The graph confirms however that despite sometimes severe falls (remember the bear market of the early '70s and the Crash of '87) the long-term performance trend of the FTA All Share Index has been firmly upward.

Source: Micropal. Performance from 1.1.71 — 1.11.90.

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(So that we can call you to answer any questions you may have)



Fidelity Investments

Life insurance companies are becoming nervous about declaring their with-profits bonuses this year. This is a sure sign that bad news is on the way after a poor year for world stock markets and property.

Norwich Union has for the past four or five years announced its bonuses first and then witnessed other companies tweaking their figures to appear a mite higher in the performance table. Last year Commercial Union produced its bonuses just three hours after Norwich Union on December 14.

This year, however, Norwich Union has announced it does not want to be first. It does not want to be a stalking horse any longer. Policyholders will have to wait until January 10.

A spokesman said Norwich Union did not feel it was under any obligation to go first because it had done so for the last four or five years. Hugh Scurlfield, general manager and actuary, is on record as saying that payouts for 25-year policies and longer have scope to increase, but that shorter policies will come under pressure. The company says it is

not expecting "substantial movements either way" on shorter term policies.

It would have suited many rivals for Norwich Union to be first again this year and establish a downward trend. The question is who will be first and how bad will their news be for investors? It could be that Commercial Union finds itself first to declare this year as its board meets on December 18 and expects to release its bonuses on that day.

One insurance company — not Norwich Union — is so nervous about what it has to reveal that it has taken the unorthodox step of offering to pay journalists to place friendly articles in national newspapers explaining why it is a good thing for bonuses to be cut.

The company is trying to prepare policyholders and insurance salesmen for bad news. It has failed. It has alerted us to the levels of dishonesty that are considered necessary to sell more policies. It is not the sentiments

Bad news ahead on the bonus front



COMMENT

LINDSAY COOK
WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

of the people locked into long-term investments that concern the industry but how they will sell policies next year if they have to admit any degree of failure this year. They should learn a little bit of the long-termism that investors are urged to adopt.

Nobody is in any doubt that high bonuses cannot be sustained in current markets, but that does not mean it is the wrong time to take out a 25-year investment.

There is greatest concern in companies about the reversionary, or annual, bonuses, which once announced are guaranteed. These affect all policies and cost most to hold at 1989 levels or to increase. Companies are faced

with the choice of paying bonuses in line with investment earnings this year or digging deep into reserves.

Terminal bonuses are paid on maturity and therefore to a much smaller number of policyholders each year. Some companies place much greater emphasis on these bonuses, as for a smaller spend they can move further up the performance tables and sell more policies in subsequent years.

The terminal bonus can account for more than 60 per cent of the final pay out. This year's chart-topping terminal bonus may help salesmen to sell policies, but it is no guarantee to investors nearing maturity that

next year's will be as attractive. It will be interesting to see whether insurance companies have more concern for new sales or existing policyholders.

No excuses

The sorry saga of Stock Group investors does not improve. Every promise seems to be broken. Last month the investors who have been waiting since June to be given some of their cash back were told that details of what they were owed would be sent by the end of November.

Compensation would not be far behind. No circulars have been forthcoming. Investors who have in many cases inadvertently been caught up in the collapse of British and Commonwealth have been told by the broker that no figures can yet be given to the board to enable compensation of up to £15,000 to be paid. The

company has now discovered that it miscalculated interest payments on money deposited with British and Commonwealth Merchant Bank in the year to April 5. It has to revise its figures while the clients' patience runs out. Many of them started out as private clients of Chase Manhattan Stockbrokers and were sold on to the Stock Group in February.

The excuses must soon run out as to why the broker cannot supply basic information to the board and its clients.

Calling ban

Four new types of unit trusts are to be launched next year and for once commonsense has prevailed. Salesmen will not be allowed to cold-call clients and sell the new riskier funds over the telephone.

The Securities and Investments Board proposes that salesmen should be banned from selling the futures and options, more volatile geared futures and options and warrants funds, by cold calling.

Draft banking code leaves customers guessing

By LINDSAY COOK
WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

A VOLUNTARY code of practice to be introduced by banks and building societies next year will give customers new rights. However, unless it is strengthened during the three-month consultation period it will fall far short of the recommendations of the Jack Committee on banking services and subsequent white paper.

A limit on the losses on all bank, building society and store cards to £50 is the most important proposal. This would bring cash dispenser and other cards into line with credit cards. These have a £50 statutory limit under the Consumer Credit Act. But there will still be plenty of room for dispute. The draft code states that banking services customers "may be liable for all losses if they have acted fraudulently or negligently," without actually spelling out what will be considered negligent.

Customers are told never to write their personal identification number on the card or on anything usually kept with it, or in any way that could be

recognised by anyone else. No guidance is given on what is deemed recognisable. At the launch of the draft code, Sir George Blunden, the chairman of its steering committee, said disputes would still be for the banking and building societies ombudsmen to resolve.

Under the code, if the card is still in the possession of the customer, he or she is likely to have to suffer any loss.

Some customers are reluctant to accept multi-function cards to back cheques or use as a debit card because banks issue personal identification numbers (PINs) to be used in cash dispensers. Under the code, customers will be given the option of whether they have a number or not.

The Jack Committee had recommended that card security could be improved by requiring customers to acknowledge receipt of new cards and numbers before they could be used. The banks and building societies have, however, decided that customers do not want this and that it would not cut down on fraud.

The draft code is seeking guidance on whether card issuers should be compelled to give customers a choice of

PIN. About half the companies give a choice now and Barclays announced this week that it is to add this service to its cards. But cardholders must be careful with the number they choose. Many opt for a combination of their birthdate, allowing thieves who steal a handbag or brief-

'The draft code states that banking services customers may be held liable for all losses if they have acted fraudulently or negligently without actually spelling out what will be considered negligent'

case containing wallet and diary to access accounts. Customers will be told more clearly what charges they may incur on bank accounts. The white paper stated that charges should not be debited from a customer's account without prior warning of the amount. The committee accepted that charges should not be debited unless customers "were or should have been aware of them."

It did not feel that this

meant the amount to be charged should be specifically notified in advance. Some customers can be pushed into overdraft which normally means additional charges. But the draft document said: "For that minority of customers a system whereby charges could not be debited until, say, two

weeks after they were notified could be advantageous. However, it would be hard to apply such a system selectively and if it were applied to all customers would result in higher charges for all, both to cover the cost of notification and the banks' loss of earnings because of the delay."

Guy Dehn, the legal officer of the National Consumer Council, said the council wanted customers to be warned before charges were

levied so that they could avoid being overdrawn and incurring even more charges. Many customers were confused by being given details of un-cleared balances on their bank statements. The original recommendation was that they should be given both cleared and un-cleared balances.

The code falls short in that it expects banks to give customers full information on the cheque-clearing cycle. This may prove to be complicated. A customer who pays in a cheque will normally find it is cleared in three working days. A transfer of money from a savings account to a current account at the same branch is counted as cleared funds. A transfer of money from a savings account held at one branch to a current account of the same bank at another branch may have to go through the bank's clearing system and take three days.

Mr Dehn said the council believed bank and building society computers could give customers the option of receiving either cleared or un-cleared balances. Abbey National, for example, gives customers both cleared and un-cleared balances.

Customer confidentiality will be safeguarded to the same degree as it is currently. Banks and building societies will be able to supply names and addresses to investment and financial subsidiaries but not details of accounts. However, Sir George, said a bank would be able to supply a list of all its personal customers with assets of £50,000 or more to an insurance subsidiary.

The large banks and building societies say that the code will be confirmation of best banking practice. National Westminster and Lloyds say that card customers are already limited to £50 losses. Barclays is considering bringing in the limit early.

Customers as well as banks and consumer groups are encouraged to put their views on the code, which is available from the Banking Information Service, 10 Lombard Street, London EC3V 9AR. They have until March to submit comments to the "Code of Banking Practice," to the same address. Sir George said that weight would be given to the "sensible and persuasive" views of the person making them.



Seeking the public's views: Sir George Blunden

Farewell to Serps may pay as pension day approaches

By WEEKEND MONEY STAFF

PEOPLE who have contracted out of the state earnings related pension scheme (Serps) could lose out if they are not advised to contract back in as they approach retirement.

Pension providers calculate that women aged up to age 40 and men up to age 45 would be better off contracted out of Serps, but that above this age the state scheme generally

gives a higher guaranteed pension than a contribution invested in a personal pension plan.

This week the National Audit Office said that four million people had contracted out of Serps since 1988 and the Government Actuary estimated this figure could reach five million. Changes introduced in 1988 allow people contracting out to invest a

rebate from their national insurance contributions in a personal pension. At the moment the rebate is 5.8 per cent on earnings of between £2,392 and £18,200, plus a further 2 per cent incentive to contract out until 1993.

David Barley, pensions marketing manager at Legal and General, said: "People have been attracted by rebate-only schemes and it pays for men up to 45 to contract out. We think women should contract back in at 37 as they will retire earlier. There comes a point where contributions will buy more in Serps because the government promises a guaranteed amount of benefit whereas a private plan relies on the return on investment. People have to take a view on investment performance."

Legal and General writes to its 300,000 policyholders contracted out of Serps when it thinks they should consider contracting back in. Another large provider, the Prudential, which has 500,000 contracted out policyholders, relies on the salesmen who sold the contracts to advise people.

People who bought their contracts through independent financial advisers need to check for themselves when they would benefit more from contracting back in. The Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association (Fimbra), the watchdog for independent advisers, confirmed that independent advisers were not obliged to tell policyholders they should go back into Serps.

People in a contracted out money purchase occupational scheme matching the relevant ages should also consider contracting back into Serps.

Borrie fears Christmas credit trap

By SARA MCCONNELL

BANKS and building societies are offering to mail their customers with offers of personal loans to pay off other debts, despite warnings to members of the public from the Office of Fair Trading not to fall into unmanageable debt, particularly over Christmas.

The proposed banking code published this week will also require lenders to act responsibly and to take particular care when dealing with applications from young people aged 18 to 21.

Sir Gordon Borrie, director general of the Office of Fair Trading, cautioned this week: "Christmas is traditionally the time of the annual peak in credit use. In November and December 1989, credit card and finance house advances to consumers totalled £6.98 billion and latest statistics for this year indicate that borrowing continues at a high level. In a survey on the use of consumer credit commissioned by my office a couple of years ago, a fifth of credit users said they had taken on credit commitments they had later regretted."

Customers considered creditworthy are mailed regularly by most large societies and banks and offered both secured and unsecured loans. Secured loans use the borrower's home as security, which means lenders can sell

the home to pay off the loan if the borrower defaults. Unsecured loans are offered on the basis of a customer's creditworthiness and generally carry a higher rate of interest than a secured loan.

Those wanting to consolidate credit cards or other debts into a single loan will usually find that the interest rate is fixed at the outset for the full term of the loan, which can be from one to five years.

Jean Eaglesham, senior researcher at the Consumers' Association, said: "It may make sense to consolidate debts into one loan but people should look at the total cost of credit. A loan may look cheaper but short term credit on credit cards is paid off more quickly and you are not locked into a long term loan."

The Alliance and Leicester Building Society is currently mailing customers, offering unsecured loans to consolidate other debts through Alliance and Leicester Personal Finance, its wholly-owned subsidiary.

Trevor Hilliard, its managing director, said: "We don't mail specifically to people suggesting they should do a debt consolidation but we are saying if people are in the market for a loan they should consider Alliance and Leicester. If they do need cash to pay off expensive credit card bills we reckon our loan would be cheaper than most. We don't mail to people

who have started a mortgage in the last 12 months or who are more than one month in arrears."

Alliance and Leicester's unsecured loan has a 23.9 per cent APR on any loan of £2,000 or more repaid by direct debit, but customers wanting to make payments by another method would be charged 25.9 per cent on any amount. A letter to society customers says: "If you do need cash for improvements round the house, new furniture, a new kitchen or bathroom, a car or for paying off expensive credit card bills, this loan could be the quickest and simplest way to get the money you want."

The rates initially look cheap compared with those charged by credit cards, but if a borrower decides to pay off such loans early there is usually a penalty. Lloyds' Access card carries a rate of 26.8 per cent APR while Midland charges 32.1 per cent. Barclaycard users pay 27.8 per cent APR for credit and 28.1 per cent APR for cash advances. However, credit card issuers say that these rates will be cut if, as looks likely, interest rates fall another couple of points and borrowers will not be locked into these rates.

Ian Overgate, marketing manager of Save and Prosper, said: "We will see a reaction to the cut in interest rates although we would normally only change rates once or twice a

year." Save and Prosper charges 24.9 per cent APR for credit and 25.9 per cent for cash advances.

Banks and building societies offering personal loans point out that locking into a fixed rate loan can benefit customers when interest rates are high.

A Barclays spokeswoman said: "It can work both ways and people have to assess the rates at the time."

Barclays and the Halifax will not offer unsecured loans for debt consolidation and say they do not actively promote the option of consolidating debts with a secured loan, although this is available. NatWest said it stopped advertising credit facilities 18 months ago but it still mails customers with offers of secured and unsecured loans.

A NatWest spokesman said: "We took a conscious decision to be more reactive. We are providing a service for our customers and found they did not want unsecured loans, particularly as interest rates have been very high. Our last mailing to selected customers was in October."

A Halifax spokesman said: "We offer a roll-up facility with a secured loan. At the moment the rate is 18.9 per cent but this is variable and reviewed from time to time. We have written to our borrowers when we know they can afford it and we are considering a spring mailing."

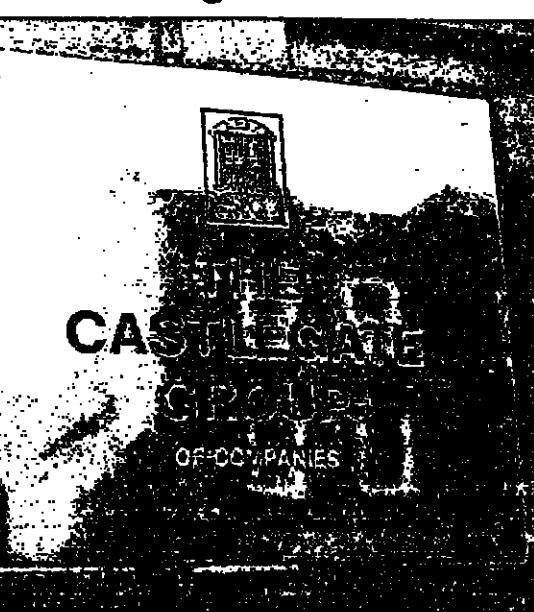
Doors finally close at Castlegate

CASTLEGATE Group Holdings and five subsidiary companies went into creditors' voluntary liquidation on Tuesday at the request of Roy Wharton, the group chairman (Sara McConnell writes).

The companies due to be wound up at a creditors' meeting at Reading, Berkshire, on December 19 are Castlegate Group Holdings, Castlegate Securities, Castlegate Administrative Services, Castlegate Financial Services (Reading), Castlegate Insurance Brokers (Reading) and Walford Finance.

Michael Hardy and Co, the estate agent, another Castlegate subsidiary, has been sold. Mr Wharton has called in Radford, Sons and Co, a Southampton accountant, as liquidator, but it is normal practice for the liquidator to be ratified by the creditors.

Michael Radford, senior partner at the liquidator's said it was not yet clear what the financial position of the Castlegate companies was. But he added: "Mr Wharton is confident that all the money will be repaid. National Westminster Bank is owed a rel-



Drawbridge up: liquidator called in at Castlegate

atively small sum of money." Castlegate Securities, one of the subsidiaries of the Castlegate Group, operated the Capital Fund Owners' Plan, which offered investors willing to put a minimum of £250,000 into the scheme a 20 per cent return. In the early days of the scheme smaller sums qualified

for the plan. The money was used to set up limited companies owned by the investors and these companies made second and third mortgage advances to home owners and small builders.

Two of these companies, Brandon Finance and Walford Finance, went into admin-

istrative receivership last week and Walford Finance is now in voluntary liquidation.

A further two, Applied Finance and Advance Finance, were taken into administrative receivership on October 19.

Castlegate guaranteed advances made by the companies to borrowers.

The Capital Fund Owners' Plan brochure promised: "Every advance made to borrowers is fully secured by a mortgage on residential property."

"Furthermore, Castlegate also guarantees these mortgages so full capital protection is assured."

Mr Radford said: "If Castlegate had a recourse agreement with these companies to cover them when borrowers let them down and Castlegate cannot keep this agreement, investors might have a claim against Castlegate."

Sorsky Specialised Financial Services, which was appointed joint administrative receiver for Brandon Finance and Walford Finance on November 19, said it was acting for a bank that was

owed £1 million by the two companies. Harold Sorsky, a partner, said the companies borrowed money from the bank which they in turn lent out as mortgage advances on 60 properties.

"Banks were attracted by the security of property and Castlegate's guarantees, but it appears that the valuations on the properties were inflated and now everyone is defaulting," he said.

Price Waterhouse, the chartered accountants, said that where a creditor's voluntary liquidation was applied for it normally meant that a company was insolvent or that there was a concern that it might be.

It was not always clear at the outset whether a company was insolvent or not, it added. The spokesman said the position of investors would depend on individual circumstances.

The Thames Valley Fraud Squad is investigating Castlegate and its subsidiaries in conjunction with the Serious Fraud Office. The officer in charge said it would be some months before enquiries were completed.

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US legal

A would-be pop star who struck a chord on supermarket stage

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

BUSINESS PROFILE

John Hardman

John Hardman is an unlikely pop star. The chairman of Asda, Britain's third largest supermarket group, is a small, round man with glasses and a bluff Liverpoolian style.

It is easier to imagine him pushing a trolley round one of his stores on a Saturday morning than strutting his stuff in the pubs and clubs of Liverpool on a Saturday night. But as the driving force behind The Zenith Four, Mr Hardman rocked with the best of them. John Lennon was a fellow classmate at Quarry Bank High School.

"Everyone in Liverpool had a group at that time," says Hardman. "You couldn't not have a group. It was me and a couple of friends of mine who were dockers and one pal from round the corner. We were really terrible. We'd practice for hours and hours but we would get worse rather than better. 'Diana' was the hit record at the time and we used to scream it out. We did about six shows, well six little bashes, and then embarrassment overtook us and we packed it in."

The career of the budding rock star ended when Hardman's father demolished the guitar in a fit of rage after the young John had been out late. But Hardman still cherishes a fantasy from the old days. "Given more time who knows," he says nostalgically. "If you listen to the Beatles' early stuff it was pretty dreadful too."

As a schoolboy Hardman was a reluctant scholar, wilfully ignorant. It is an epithet which some of his critics in the City believe has a relevance today. Hardman is not, by his own admission, a man for detail, preferring the broader picture. "I like to do things at my pace in my time," he says. "I don't like to be disciplined or organised." He can be stubborn.

He is an engaging man with an open, honest approach and friends speak of him fondly. Noel Stockdale, the ex-chairman of Asda who appointed Hardman as finance director in the early 1980s, says: "He is a first class man, a superb fellow, straight as a die." Derek Hunt, chairman of MFI, which used to be part of the Asda group, says: "He's got a wicked sense of humour and the sort of mind that grasps wide issues quickly. He's very bright but he's also modest. People see him as a Liverpool lad, but he's much much more."

If Hardman is an unlikely pop star, he is in many ways an unlikely chairman of one of Britain's biggest companies. He has none of the pomposity and little of the solemnity which goes with the job. His interests are broader than many of his peers and he is not afraid to admit that he likes having a good time outside work, on the golf course and supporting Liverpool football club.

"I'm the sort of person who enjoys life," he says. "I see these career guys working in business today, working and worrying. You have to have a life outside. Life isn't just about the pursuit of pleasure but you have to get some fun." His critics say he is "light-weight". Derek Hunt counters that saying: "He's a man who knows his own weaknesses and compensates for them."

"The British business community actually works very hard. Much harder than its French, German, Italian or American

counterpart. Perhaps not as hard as the Japanese but then they are seriously different from us," says Hardman.

He is working harder than ever at present in an attempt to put Asda back on the right track and regain the confidence of the City. Last year was a poor year for the group and 1990 has not been much easier.

The Canadian Belzberg brothers took a threatening stake in the business, the group's results were disappointing and, in April this year, the shares fell to an eight-year low of 88p. There was criticism of the £705 million acquisition of 61 supermarkets from Gateway and expensive problems with the central distribution system. Two institutional shareholders were unsupportive and there were calls for his resignation.

Hardman is a fighter, but even so he is not immune to the criticism he has faced. "There was a time when people were going round saying the management's rubbish, and that ain't on. It's not true and it's not fair. It's bloody hurtful."

"The last six years have been the hardest I've ever had in my life. They've knocked some of the carefree spirit out of me. It's my innate Liverpoolianism, my sense of humour, that keeps me going. I hate to lose," he says.

Hardman is convinced he will regain the ground Asda lost to Sainsbury, Tesco and Safeway in the late Seventies. Derek Hunt, who worked closely with Hardman at Asda, also believes the current supermarket formula is right. "He is still following the five-year plan he put in place in 1987 and he is doing the right thing," says Hunt. "He has had a lot of adversity but he's a stickler and a survivor. Eventually companies get the share rating they deserve and I believe Asda is a good bet for the future."

The City is still divided on the issue and Hardman's profile is not the strongest. "I don't know why he doesn't shine in the City," says Hunt. Philip Dorgan, food retail analyst at Goldman Sachs, says: "Asda has been through a rough patch and John Hardman has faced a testing time. They are doing all the right things now and the shares should be bought for recovery."

But some analysts and institutional investors retain doubts about the quality of the management, the quality of the store portfolio and the £900 million of debt. Most agree that Hardman cannot afford to make any more mistakes but they also believe he has survived the worst. In the City's eyes he is slowly being rehabilitated.

John Nimrod Hardman was born in Liverpool on October 8, 1939, the only son in a family of six daughters. Hardman had a happy childhood. It was a domestic scene which was never boring. "There was always something

going on, usually mayhem. You had to look after yourself from a very early age otherwise you were down-trodden by the rest of the herd. My sisters would say I was spoiled. I would say I was terrorised," says Hardman.

His father, Harry, used to run Vernons Pools and was the man who invented the triple chance. His mother, Florence, was an excellent card player and Hardman himself enjoys gambling. He has a stake in two racetracks, one of which, Sir Harry Hardman, won the Cartier Challenge in September at Phoenix Park in Dublin, netting the four-man syndicate £140,000. He still keeps closely in touch with his family and has friends who date back to his Liverpool primary school days.

Despite spending more time on the football and cricket pitches than in academic study, Hardman did well enough in his final exams to go to Liverpool University where he studied economics. "I went to university out of sheer fear of the outside world," he says.

"I went to Liverpool University because I was playing football in Liverpool and that was pretty serious. In Liverpool playing football was a natural thing to do. I wish I were fit enough to play one-

"The last six years have been the hardest I've ever had in my life. They've knocked some of the carefree spirit out of me. It's my innate Liverpoolianism, my sense of humour, that keeps me going — I hate to lose"

and-half hours' good football at a decent amateur level again."

He left university and joined a firm of chartered accountants called Duncan, Watson & Short.

"Knowing your way around a profit and loss account and a balance sheet is useful, but it's not the end of the world," he says. "I cherish the times I had as an articled clerk in Liverpool. Some of the things we got up to were mind-boggling. I suppose we were reasonably well-educated juvenile delinquents looking for any reason to let off steam."

It was while he was training to be an accountant that he met his wife Joan, a stewardess with British Airways. They started going out together whenever she was home and they married 25 years ago. "It's worked out terrifically well, which is really a testimony to Joan's fortitude," he says. "The saving grace of our marriage is that we haven't seen that much of each other. We've never lived on top of each other. She's one of these people who is quite happily independent and we don't put a lot of pressure on each other."

He says he is the type of person who gets bored easily, which was one of the reasons he left accountancy to take up the challenge of general management, joining the Radio Corporation of America in 1966. He helped to run a company manufacturing picture tubes for television until it was put out of business by Japanese competition in 1973.

He stayed with RCA, moving his family, which by this time included his son Mike and daughter



Apart yet together: John Hardman and wife Joan, far from the London he has no time for, at their home in Wetherby

ter Jake, to America, firstly Pennsylvania and then New York. They returned five years later. "At the end of the day I wanted to come home," he says. "It sounds a bit wimpy but it's true. The only place I ever wanted to live was the north of England. I didn't want my children to grow up Americans." He has a house in Wetherby, West

Hardman knew that RCA wanted to sell the business and he and Fletcher put together a management buyout proposal. Gulliver pipped them to it and bought his old business back. Fletcher went off to become managing director of Asda stores and Hardman followed some months later as finance director. It was his first real experience of retailing.

Asda, which at the time was known as Associated Dairies, was a profitable business but Hardman sensed that the momentum which had fuelled its growth was running out. He describes it as a "highly self-congratulatory organisation" which benefited from having a monopoly in some areas of the country.

The accounts were produced once a quarter, three months after the quarter end. "It was a very old fashioned business," says Hardman. There was no plan for the future. It had a big price advantage over the competition but every year it was being eroded. It was fine while there was no competition because it was like a bloody big Aladdin's cave."

His diagnosis of the business was not shared by Fletcher. "John didn't want to know," says Hardman. "He was very aloof. As each year went by the arguments got more and more profound. We

missed an amazing opportunity in the late Seventies and early Eighties to stamp our mark. Asda stood still at a time when Sainsbury and Tesco were on the move. We kept arguing about what to do and that arguing only stopped when John was fired."

Hardman stepped into Fletcher's shoes. Their relationship was irreparably damaged. "If you were to interview John Fletcher today I think he would say that I was the guy who shafted him. But I was not saying anything to others that I wasn't saying to him. There was no back stabbing," says Hardman. Fletcher refuses to talk about the incident.

But Hardman insists he is no politician. "I can't understand politics in business. I don't understand what it is that motivates people to be politicians. I think they want something out of business which business can't give them. I don't like people trying to manipulate me." Nevertheless it was nothing short of a boardroom coup which put him where he is today.

He admits that there is still a long way to go at Asda and he intends to stay with the business until he has finished the job. "I have a burning ambition to get Asda right," he says. Of the 200

stores now in the portfolio only 95 have been refurbished in the new Asda style.

But he does not intend to retire at Asda. "Once we've cracked it I'd probably be a bloody nuisance as a chairman," he says. He is not sure what he will do next. "I'm 51 and I'm still trying to work out what I want to do with the rest of my life. I won't go into graceful retirement and I don't want to become a non-executive buff either. I want to do a job." His dream is to tour the golf courses of Britain with his son.

He has few regrets in life but admits to a feeling of guilt that he has not been as good a parent as he might have been. Apart from the racetracks and a Daimler there are few luxuries. He earned £231,000 last year, taking a £30,000 pay cut to reflect the fall in Asda's profits. "We live very well indeed but it's not a high life," he says.

"I don't want to be beholden to anyone. I rather live and die by my own judgment than anyone else's. I don't like bosses, that's why I'm a boss. I probably should have worked for myself. I like calling the shots. It's not because I want to be powerful, it's because I don't want anyone to mess me about."

"But I don't like people thinking I'm important, it makes me feel uncomfortable. I'm glad I wasn't a pop star."

US legal ethics go on trial

CAPITAL CITY

CHARLES BRENNER IN NEW YORK



Pitfall: New York roadworks

tions", as they invented injuries, fabricated evidence and bought false testimony, said Jerome Roth, the prosecutor.

Among witnesses, the prosecution is calling Arnold Lustig, who made a living as something of a professional passer-by. He testified he happened to be driving past scenes of alleged accidents and could always swear that he saw the victim said it was. As an example of the firm's ethics, the Eisen lawyers were alleged to have ordered their assistants into lifts with members of the jury to win them over.

Many of the tales come from Stephen DiJoseph, a former managing lawyer at the firm who has turned state's witness. But Mr

Eisen and his associates are not taking the charges lying down. They plan to call experts and witnesses with a view to showing the jury that the prosecutors bought or coerced their own witnesses. The federal government was trying to send a message, thundered the chief lawyer for the lawyers. "Don't win too much money and don't fight too hard against us."

With all the lawyers involved, it is not surprising that the trial is expected to last between four and six months. If convicted, the Eisen practice could find itself behind bars for about two decades.

Theirs is far from the only case of allegedly crooked lawyers to hit the headlines in recent months. As times become harder, more and more lawyers are succumbing to the temptation to take their own clients for a ride. The New York state bar has already paid out \$4.4 million from a special fund this year in compensation for the malfeasance of its own members.

Such cases have included that of Lawrence Patterson, a Pennsylvania lawyer, who pocketed \$225,000 he won in damages for a client whose brother was killed in an air crash. Mr Patterson never told the client that he had won the case.

The most creative piece of legal thievery to come to light was committed by a New York lawyer who inserted an imaginary heir into an illiterate client's will. When the client died, the fictional relative came in for half the estate and the lawyer almost got away with it, according to an account in *The Wall Street Journal*. When the family demanded proof, the lawyer disguised himself as the woman and checked into a local hotel. But the deceptionist grew suspicious of the mysterious woman in sunglasses and reported her to police. The lawyer was disbarred.

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WEEKEND MONEY

42

THE TIMES SATURDAY DECEMBER 8 1990

SUMMARY

Stags are roaring to sell

MORE than eight million people have applied for electricity shares and many have already made arrangements to make sure they can sell their allocations on Tuesday afternoon as soon as dealing starts.

Brokers report that up to 70 per cent of applicants are planning to sell the shares in the hope of quick profits. Many have learned a lesson from the water flotation and have spread their applications over several or all of the companies instead of applying for a large number of shares in just one.

Rock steady



The former driving force behind The Zenith Four pop group is now chairman of Asda supermarkets. John Hardman tells Gillian Bowditch how his pop career came to an abrupt end when his father broke his guitar, and how he overcame his disappointment by rising to the top of Britain's third largest supermarket chain.

Cards code

A new code of practice urges banks to limit liability for all lost or stolen cards to £50 unless customers have been negligent, a move which is generally welcomed by banks. But the code does not make it clear how negligence should be defined.

Loan trap

Building societies and banks are continuing to offer unsecured loans for consolidating other debts into one. Customers can find themselves locked into higher rates for longer periods, with penalties for paying off the loan early.

Castlegate closes

Castlegate, the Reading firm that offered 20 per cent investment returns, has gone into voluntary liquidation at the request of Roy Wharton, its chairman.

Act of God



God moves in mysterious ways and compensates Sydney Donald for falling masonry from a Methodist church. But it nearly ended up in the small claims court. All is revealed in readers' letters.

Tessa tempters

Banks and building societies such as Lloyds, Cheltenham & Gloucester, Bank of Scotland and Chelsea are devising more offers to tempt people to invest in Tessa.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

New broom at BTR

"In Australia, the word is that Alan Jackson walks on water. Who else, they say, could have transformed an obscure hose and belting manufacturer into the country's second-biggest company in little more than a decade?"

The new head of BTR, in The Sunday Times tomorrow.

Inheritors cash in on rise in property values

IT IS not only the meek who are inheriting the earth. The Henley Centre for Forecasting estimates that 50 per cent of people over 50 will inherit £50,000 or more. Last year, £14.7 billion was inherited by British families, and a report carried out by the centre for the Household Mortgage Corporation, published this week, shows that the amount of property being passed on is rising rapidly (Lindsay Cook writes).

In 1980 bricks and mortar accounted for £2.16 billion of the inheritances received in Britain; this year, the figure is expected to be £7.92 billion. By the end of the century the Henley centre calculates £28.79 billion worth of property will be passed on from one generation to the next. In the past, homes have made up approximately half of the total inherited each year. If this continues, by the year 2000, the annual inheritance for British families is likely to pass £35 billion.

The one million council house sales over the last decade were one factor in the increase in inheritance value. These sales had slowed since the peak years, but Duncan Young, HMC managing director, said the long-term effect of the policy of selling council houses would be dramatic. "Our figures show that even in 1989 more than 200,000 council homes were sold to

their tenants. The fact that there are fewer homes in Britain than there are people wanting to buy them means that the value of these homes is going to rise by more than the rate of inflation."

HMC, along with other financial institutions, is keen to know how much is being inherited because it is a crucial factor in people's total incomes. Mr Young continued: "It may well be that, as people inherit, the savings that were invested in homes rather than the economy over the past ten years will move in the opposite direction."

In the past, some of the inherited money had gone towards property purchase. This was thought to be particularly the case in 1988, when house prices in the Southeast rose to more than five times annual earnings. Usually the ratio is less than four. Many first-time buyers were putting down larger than expected deposits on properties, indicating that inherited money was in some cases bypassing a generation.

The latest survey, an update on 1988, suggests that 48 per cent of money inherited will be invested. People throughout the country were asked what they would spend £20,000 on if they inherited such a sum. Almost half, 48 per cent, said they would invest or save it.

More than a fifth, 22 per cent, said they would spend it on housing, while another 4 per cent would buy things for their home. One in ten would share the money with their family and 7 per cent would start a business.

The HMC spokesman said that two factors could change the amount of property inherited in the next few years. The first was an improvement in home income plan schemes, which allow elderly people to use part of the value of their home to produce an income. A great many old people wanted to realise such money, but tax restrictions prevented them. An increase in the use of such schemes would reduce the amount to be inherited, particularly in the Southeast. It would also increase the number of wealthy older people.

The increasing trend towards longer mortgage periods and interest-only loans would mean that more people would die with a mortgage still to be paid off from the proceeds of the sale of the family home.

The annual heritable wealth survey produced by Smees and Ford, probate specialists, shows that not only is the total amount inherited increasing, but the size of individual estates is also rising fast. In the last survey 453 wills involved £1

million or more, an increase of 30 per cent on the previous year.

The post-war increase in home ownership and rising property prices in the Seventies and Eighties have contributed most to this. The difference in house prices between the north and south and the uneven spread of home ownership throughout the country mean that inheritance also varies. Home ownership has exceeded 70 per cent in the Southeast, while in Scotland just over 50 per cent of homes are owner-occupied.

In the north, it is still possible to buy terraced family homes for £35,000 to £40,000, whereas in Greater London average prices are nearer £90,000. The average Greater London estate was £87,000 last year, compared with £45,000 in the Northeast. These averages do not include disposals made seven years before death to escape inheritance tax, which is charged at 40 per cent on estates worth more than £128,000. Only 22,000 estates are expected to pay inheritance tax this year, with a total £1 billion for collection.

At the Halifax Building Society, Gary Marsh, head of planning and research, said that the ultimate equity release was when people died and their homes were sold. There was evidence that some of the money went back into the property

market for grandchildren. "Inheritance will be much more important in the Nineties as the people who bought their first homes after the Second World War begin to die," said Mr Marsh. "The majority of people want to save money that is inherited and there is a limited amount of paying off mortgages, but not much."

Mr Marsh said that few people inherited the whole family home. They usually shared it with brothers and sisters or cousins. In such cases, the property had to be sold and the beneficiaries had to make a decision about investment.

"The average house price in the UK is £67,000 and the majority of properties are inherited by two or three people, giving them each £22,000, ideal for building societies. Gradually some of the money might be transferred elsewhere but societies tend to be the first parking place."

As most inheritors were in their late forties or fifties, pensions were often considered a suitable investment. The tax incentives for people who have not provided fully for their old age made a pension an attractive option. Many inheritors tended towards cautious investment with money received from parents because they knew it was worked hard for, he added.

Hunting around can run heirs to ground

By LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

"TO WHOM it may concern: a fortune has been left to you in a relative's will." Such advertisements appear regularly in newspapers throughout Britain. Yet hundreds of people never discover the large sums of money that have been left to them in wills (Lindsay Cook writes).

Increasingly, British families are growing apart and losing touch. Illegitimate children often do not know who their parents are. When a relative dies and leaves them money they do not hear about it.

Enter the tracing agencies. They are growing businesses throughout Britain. Executors and legal firms are using them more and more to trace all the beneficiaries of estates. For a percentage of the legacy involved or for a fee, they will go to extraordinary lengths to find missing nephews and nieces.

George Hooper and Sons, the biggest of three tracing agencies, has been going since 1923. It now handles between 200 and 300 estates a year, sometimes searching for a single named beneficiary, and occasionally for an entire family. Roger Hooper, grandson of the founder and the present head of the firm, said it is an increasingly important business.

"We specialise in tracing unclaimed estates where there are no

wills or where the beneficiaries have moved," he said. "We try to untangle the mess. In one case we had to find 125 cousins who were all entitled to a share of £40,000. Some did not even get into double figures when it was all sorted out."

One of the complications is that tracing agencies cannot stop when they have found a few beneficiaries. Once they have started they must find them all, and prove in law that they have done so.

The case of Dorothea Allen, a millionaire who died having

'Quite often cases are just a mystery. The person dies having eliminated all of their past'

destroyed all evidence of her background, attracted publicity this summer when her home and contents were auctioned. While the amount involved was large, the circumstances were not very unusual, according to Mr Hooper.

"Quite often cases are just a mystery. The person who has died has succeeded in eliminating their past and their money passes to the

state," he said. The largest estate handled by Hooper's was more than £300,000. The firm was able to trace all the beneficiaries.

"We are going to get an increase in the number of cases where it is difficult to trace beneficiaries because of the problems of illegitimacy. Illegitimate children are not ruled out of benefiting from an estate, but often they cannot identify who their parents are. The number of illegitimate births is now running at 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the total."

Adopted children are treated in law in the same way as the natural children of the family that adopts them. But they lose any rights to the estate of their natural parents.

Mr Hooper said that his company's searches extended all over the world. The firm has an office in Toronto, Canada, and agents in most countries. "We often help them with their tracing and they reciprocate when we need to make enquiries further afield."

Much of the tracing is necessary because people do not make a will or because the wording is imprecise. "Any lawyer should be able to advise a client to make sure that the intentions are clear, but we still have to find people when a will says 'to my good friend John



Popular venue: the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane where wills may be read free of charge.

Brown" with an address from 50 years ago.

"In other cases a will might say 'I leave everything equally between my brothers and sisters'. There might be no names and we would have to trace all the brothers and sisters, and often their children if the brothers and sisters have died."

People who feel they may have been left money by a relative can trace it themselves through the Public Record Office. Wills, inventories, death duty registers and other probate records may be read free of charge at the office in Chancery Lane, London WC2. They are on microfilm and a photocopying service is available.

Those people who cannot visit the search rooms themselves can send details by post of the name, address and approximate date of death to the office. Since 1858 a copy of every will proved has been lodged at the Principal Registry of the Family Division, Somerset House, Strand, London. These include royal wills. In 1948 Princess Victoria Louise left an estate of £52,435 12s 9d, for example,

When an estate passes to the Crown because no will is made and there are no known kin, relatives have up to 30 years after the death to make a claim. These should be made to the Treasury solicitor if the deceased lived in England and Wales, the solicitor to the Duchy of Lancaster for

'We have to find people when a will says 'to my good friend' with a 50 year old address'

those who lived in Lancashire, the solicitor to the Duchy of Cornwall for those who lived in Cornwall and the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer for those who lived in Scotland.

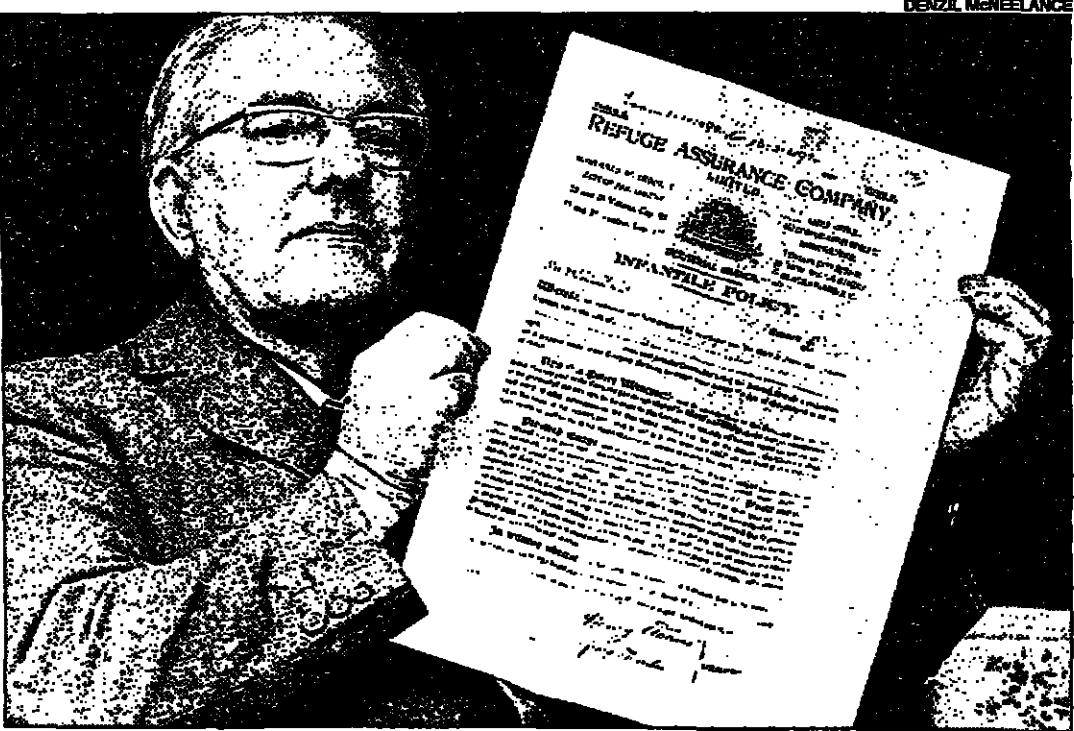
Most of the 2,000 estates dealt with by the Treasury solicitor's office each year involve small sums. Claimants who think they are entitled to a share in one of the estates should write giving their full name and address, the basis of

their claim, the full name of the deceased person, the date of death, last known address and age.

The Public Record Office warns people against relying on the statements of unclaimed money agents and points out that the Supreme Court of Judicature has no such agents. It recommends that independent advice should be taken before making a payment to any agency to secure money alleged to be in court.

A list of dormant funds paid into the Chancery Court for heirs who cannot be traced can be inspected by any member of the public at the offices of the court funds division, Public Trust Office, 22 Kingsway, London WC2. The Solicitor to the Duchy of Cornwall, 10 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LA; The Solicitor to the Duchy of Lancaster, Lancaster Place, Strand, London WC2 7ED; The Treasury Solicitor (BV), Queen Anne's Chambers, 28 Broadway, London SW1H 9BS; and the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, Crown Office, 5/7 Regent Road, Edinburgh EH7 5BL.

Penny a week policy worth a mere £15 after 98 years



Penny wise: David Chaffer with his mother's policy taken out when she earned £1.75 a week

BENEFICIARIES of "penny a week" policies can be disappointed when they find the proceeds of the matured policies have not increased since they were taken out at the turn of the century (Sara McConnell writes).

David Chaffer, a Weekend Money reader, discovered that a policy for £15, taken out on his mother's life with Refuge Assurance in 1891, was still worth only £15 when his mother died 98 years later.

Mr Chaffer's mother, Jessie Chaffer, had paid a penny a week into the policy. When she retired in 1955, Mr Chaffer took over payment of the policy.

"Insurance companies do not want to know about these policies," said Mr Chaffer. "But my mother was one of eight children. She earned £1 15s a week as a teacher in Norfolk, she paid 30s for lodgings and had 5s for everything else."

"A penny was quite a lot of money for her."

He rejected Refuge Assurance's offer of £19.80 and wrote to the insurance ombudsman. The offer

was increased to £40, but he is still not satisfied.

Keith Hartley, head of marketing at Refuge Assurance, said that the policy was a non-profit policy with a sum assured of £15.

Non-profit policies have no yearly bonuses adding to the sum assured, although under the Industrial Assurance Act 1928 a terminal bonus has to be paid out. The terminal bonus on the £15 policy was £4.80, making a total of £19.80.

Mr Hartley added that payments on the policy had lapsed for the last five years of Mrs Chaffer's life but that Refuge had reinstated the policy voluntarily.

"We had no need to reinstate this policy but the company bends over backwards to keep away from any sort of ill-feeling."

"All we want to do is close the book on this policy," he said. Mr Chaffer said he was surprised to receive so little from the Refuge policy when a penny a week policy from the Prudential, taken out at the same time, paid out more than £100 because it was a with-profits policy. A spokes-

man for the Prudential said that a penny a week policy taken out in 1890 and maturing in 1990 would have paid out £132.47 because it earned yearly bonuses and a terminal bonus on maturity.

Two years ago the Prudential stopped collecting the small weekly premiums from holders of policies more than 40 years old, although it will continue to pay out full benefits and the policies remain in force.

"It was a question of sheer economics," said the spokesman. "We notified everyone individually and issued them with an endorsement to show the policy was still in force."

Figures from the Association of British Insurers show that premium income on penny a week policies for 1985 to 1989 totalled £1.35 million.

But Chris Hamer, manager at the Insurance Ombudsman Bureau, said: "You are not going to get a lot of money from these policies at the end of the day. The policy terms are laid down and you have to read the terms of the policy properly."

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